DEFINITIONS AND AXIOMS

RELATIVE TO

CHARITY,

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS,

AND THE

POOR's LAWS.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS

To WILLIAM FELLOWES, Esq.

Occasioned by a Pamphlet, entitled,

"CONSIDERATIONS on the fatal Effects "of the present Excess of PUBLIC CHA- "RITY to a Trading Nation."

Refellere sine Pertinaciâ, & refelli sine Iracundiâ parati sumus. CICERO.

By SAMUEL COOPER, *M. A.*
Late Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge.

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TO THE

READER.

THE motive which induced the Author to commit the following Letters to the 'preſs, was the aſſurance he received from ſeveral ingenious friends, that they ſeemed calculated to be of ſome ſervice to the public. And it is with pleaſure he informs his Readers, that the Gentleman to whom they were written, was only

deſirous of the ſuppreſſion of ſome paſſages relative to himſelf; but juſtice obliges the Author to refuſe, what modeſty prompted that Gentleman to deſire.

THE Author offers no apology for the *reaſoning* in the following pages; for had he not thought that juſt, nothing could have induced him either to publiſh or to write them. But whatever errors his Readers may diſcern, it will give him pleaſure to ſee them detected; as upon ſo important a ſubject, every one muſt deſire to have every falſe reaſoning exploded; and whoever has a ſincere love for truth, muſt wiſh to acquire wiſdom, though it be by the detection of his own errors.

SOME

SOME excuſe for the *diction* may perhaps be thought neceſſary; this the Author readily acknowledges, and hopes the ſpecies of writing will be admitted as an excuſe, controverſy requiring cloſeneſs of reaſoning, and argumentation being in ſome meaſure incompatible with elegance.

AN apology might likewiſe be drawn from the *form of compoſition*, in compliance with the prevailing opinion, that all epiſtolatory writings ſhould imitate the familiar ſtile of common converſation; but the Author cannot forbear to think, that the ſtile of letters ought to vary with, and be adapted to, their ſubjects, and that ſome will not only admit, but require the utmoſt elegance of diction.

For the correction of ſome inaccuracies, which, in the heat of compoſition, eſcaped the writer, he is indebted to ſome of his acquaintance, and particularly to one, who would perhaps have rendered theſe letters ſtill more correct, had not the acuteneſs of the Critic been ſomewhat reſtrained by the partiality of the Friend.

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DEFINI-

DEFINITIONS and AXIOMS

RELATIVE TO

CHARITY.

LETTER I.

TO

WILLIAM FELLOWES, Eſq.

DEAR SIR,

I AM much obliged to you for the favour of lending me the "Conſiderations on Public Charities." And as I am certain that ſcarcely any thing would give you ſo much uneaſineſs as the reflection that you was the inſtrument, it would be ſuperfluous to ſay, the undeſigning inſtru-

ment, of depriving any one of a motive to charity, I ſhall take the liberty of ſending you my ſentiments on this Writer's production. I ſhall not, however, confine myſelf to a refutation of his objections to public charities, but introduce ſuch reflections upon charity, charitable inſtitutions, and the poor's laws, as occurred to me in the peruſal of his Conſiderations.

A ſyſtematical writer may be compared to a man travelling in one of thoſe heavy vehicles in which he muſt proceed from ſtage to ſtage, and cannot, with convenience, leave the great road to examine an object be it ever ſo curious or uſeful. But the means which I have choſen for the conveyance of my thoughts, reſemble thoſe convenient light vehicles at preſent ſo much in faſhion, in which a man is at liberty to make excurſions towards any object he may think worthy of his attention.

Of this privilege I ſhall ſometimes make uſe as I proceed, and I find myſelf under a neceſſity of making a ſhort excurſion even at firſt ſetting out, (if I may be allowed that expreſſion) in order to urge ſomething in defence of controverſial writings, as there is at preſent a great prepoſſeſſion againſt them, and controverſy is almoſt univerſally eſteemed an uſeleſs ſpecies of compoſition. The reaſon for which prejudice ſeems to be this; that, however both parties of controverſialiſts may talk of candour and truth, yet it is thought manifeſt that victory is their real aim, ſince neither party will own itſelf convinced, but after a long and tedious diſpute each ſeems to remain more ſtrongly perſuaded of the truth of its own opinions.

I have indeed undertaken to be an advocate for controverſial writers, yet ſhould I ſuffer them to plead guilty to

the *whole* of this accuſation, it by no means follows, that controverſy is an uſeleſs ſpecies of writing. For although it may be uſeleſs to the diſputants themſelves, it may be productive of great advantages to many, who ſhall afterwards cooly and diſpaſſionately examine the reaſoning of both parties. Beſides, can we ſuppoſe that all, or even the greater part of controverſial writers, are deſerving of the *whole* of this accuſation; that they are all guilty of inſincerity, all willing to ſacrifice their conſciences to their vanity; that none, or but very few, are wiſe enough to ſee that they ſhould gain much greater applauſe by the confeſſion of an error, than by perſeverance in a falſehood? This, I muſt confeſs, I can by no means ſuppoſe, and nothing but mathematical certainty, or occular conviction, ſhould ever induce me to aſſent to a ſuppoſition ſo defamatory of mankind. It cannot indeed

indeed be denied, that after a long and tedious diſpute, however clearly one of the writers may be confuted, yet it ſeldom happens that he will acknowledge himſelf convinced. But I dare to ſay, this neither univerſally nor generally proceeds from inſincerity or obſtinacy; for other very probable cauſes may be aſſigned, more favourable to the characters of this ſpecies of writers.

That men ſhould beware of miſtakes concerning the ſignification of words, and that they ſhould accurately define every complex term they uſe, is a maxim preſcribed by the moſt eminent philoſophers; but is, even by ſome of the moſt generally admired amongſt them, not always practiſed. And though it is a method generally believed to be right by the reſt of mankind, yet it is performed but by few even of thoſe writers who are held

by the world in high eſtimation for their knowledge. But that a neglect of definitions muſt occaſion great prolixity in controverſy, and great poſitiveneſs in the controverſialiſts, is very evident; for it is certain, that if two writers underſtand the ſame words in different ſenſes, they may pour out floods of ink, and waſte millions of reams of paper in controverſy, and it will be impoſſible, without the aſſiſtance of definitions, that either of them ſhould be convinced: beſides, as each muſt neceſſarily think that the meaning he aſſigns to the words is right, and neither ſuſpects that they affix different ſignifications to them, each muſt neceſſarily conclude, and has ſome reaſon to be poſitive, that his opinions are true.

It might likewiſe occaſion a conſiderable abridgment of controverſies, and open a way to the conviction of diſputants,

tants, would writers, before they begin a controverſy, require each other's aſſent to ſome general data or axioms, too evident to admit of any diſpute. For, without entering at preſent into an examination of all the criteria of truth, (an examination much wanted, notwithſtanding all which has been written upon that point) this is evident, that whenever we would diſcover the truth or falſhood of any doubtful propoſition upon any ſubject, we always compare it with ſome propoſition upon the ſame ſubject, of the truth or falſhood of which we have no doubt. And if the propoſition in diſpute can be ſhewn to be totally repugnant to the propoſition known to be true, we are then certain that this propoſition muſt he falſe. But on the contrary, if it be totally repugnant to the propoſition known to be falſe, we are then certain that it is true. By means, therefore, of theſe axioms, or general propoſi-

tions, the ſame anſwer would often deſtroy at once ſeveral different objections; and the objector by having certain general truths continually preſent to his mind, with which he may compare the objections which occur to him, and obſerve their conſiſtency with, or repugnance to theſe axioms, he will neceſſarily reject many which would otherwiſe have contributed to the prolongation of the controverſy. The objector having moreover, at firſt, given his aſſent to theſe general truths, when his objections are ſhewn to be repugnant to them, he not only receives a confutation, but he cannot likewiſe fail of conviction, nor refuſe to acknowledge the invalidity of his objections. And it is really amazing, that in an age in which mathematical ſtudies are ſo much in faſhion, (for it is too true, that there is almoſt as much of faſhion in ſtudies and opinions, as in dreſs, or any other inſignificant

ficant trifle) that this method ſhould have been ſo ſeldom adopted in other ſubjects, when its uſe is ſo apparent in that beſt branch of mathematics, geometry.

For theſe reaſons, I ſhall, Sir, previous to my examination of our Author's pamphlet, endeavour accurately to aſcertain the meaning of the word Charity, and propoſe to your conſideration a few axioms concerning charitable inſtitutions, to ſerve as criteria, by which we may judge of the truth or falſhood of his obſervations.

LETTER

LETTER II.

I AM now, Sir, to endeavour to enumerate that collection or combination of ideas, of which the word Charity is the ſign; and, prior to experience, any one would be induced to think, that there could be no difficulty in aſcertaining the ſignification of any word. For as the principal uſe of words conſiſts in the conveyance of our meaning to others, it might be ſuppoſed that common uſage would be the beſt criterion of their ſignifications; and that mankind would be as much agreed in the conſtant uſe of one word for the ſign of one particular ſet of ideas, as in making that piece of gold we call a guinea to be the conſtant repreſentative of one and twenty ſhillings. But experience convinceth us, that there is no other method by

by which we are ſo liable to deceit as by this, eſpecially in reſpect to thoſe words which are not the ſigns of one particular idea, but of a collection or combination of ideas, and that whenever we would ſpeak or write accurately, we muſt never regard the common ſignification of words, but endeavour, by other methods, to aſcertain their meaning. And let the term etymology itſelf ſerve for a proof of the corruption of words by common uſage; which, you know, originally ſignified the art of diſcovering the true meaning of them, but is now only uſed to ſignify one or two of the moſt common methods by which their ſignification is diſcovered. Neither of which ſhall I adopt at preſent, but in order to underſtand the exact meaning of the word Charity, I ſhall beg leave to propoſe the following indiſputable rule. "That when any particular word, in a "living language, has, by agreement,

"been

" been conſtantly appropriated to the " tranſlation of a particular word in a " certain ſenſe in a dead language, the " word in the living language ought con- " ſtantly to be uſed as the ſign of the " ſame collection or combination of ideas " with that in the dead language. Now " let us apply this to the word Charity."

THE Greek word αγαπη, which is frequently uſed in the New Teſtament, ſignifies love in general; what particular ſpecies therefore of love is meant to be implied by it, in any particular ſentence, muſt be determined by the context. But this term is frequently tranſlated by the word Charity, never indeed when the Greek word is underſtood in this extenſive ſenſe, and ſuppoſed to ſignify love in general, but conſtantly, when its meaning is ſuppoſed to be confined to the love of mankind in particular. By the foregoing rule

rule then it neceſſarily follows, that the word Charity likewiſe ſignifies the love of mankind. Thus, far therefore we have proceeded in our definition; but from hence ariſes a queſtion, When can we be ſaid to love mankind? You, I know, Sir, will immediately anſwer from your own experience, "when we endeavour to "promote their happineſs, or alleviate "their miſery, to the utmoſt extent of "our power, without any other view to "our own advantage, than to the ſecret "pleaſure which reſults from a conſciouſ-"neſs of our virtue, and the hope of "happineſs in the next life, which is "promiſed as the reward of virtue in "this." Hence then ariſes another queſtion, In what does the happineſs and miſery of man conſiſt? You will anſwer, "His happineſs conſiſts in the welfare of "his ſoul, his body, and his fortune; "his miſery, in the contrary." The conclu-

cluſion therefore is this, that a man is to be called a charitable man, who, under the above reſtrictions, endeavours to the utmoſt of his power, to contribute to the welfare, or to leſſen the ill-condition of the ſouls, the bodies, or fortunes of mankind. One queſtion more, and I have done with this method of reaſoning; When can an inſtitution, in ſtrict propriety of ſpeech, be termed a charitable inſtitution? "When it is deſigned to contribute to "the welfare, or leſſen the ill-condition "of the ſouls, the bodies, or the fortunes "of individuals, without any injury to "the reſt of mankind."

My ſubject now naturally leads me to propoſe to your conſideration the axioms relative to charitable inſtitutions; but ſo many uſeful conſequences are deducible from this definition of charity, and it is of ſo much ſervice in the elucidiation of ſome

ſome miſtaken texts of ſcripture, that I ſhall beg leave to make this application of it, before I proceed to an examination of our Author's Pamphlet. For if this be a digreſſion, not to digreſs in this place would be a breach of duty, and to attempt to apologize for it would be an affront.

THERE is no error more generally entertained concerning the duties of religion, than for men to expect certain benefits in conſequence of the performance of particular acts, which are only promiſed as the rewards of as perfect and unfailing an obedience as humanity can reach; and many errors of this kind have ariſen, for want of a true definition and clear underſtanding of the word Charity. This word having been frequently thought to ſignify only the giving of alms, and forgiveneſs of injuries, ſome men have been induced

to think, from ſeveral texts of ſcripture, that the performance of theſe duties would be a ſufficient atonement for a multitude of ſins; and, in conſequence of this notion, many have lead a life of ſin, without remorſe, and died in the commiſſion of it with expectation of eternal happineſs, only from willing their eſtates to charitable uſes, when they could no longer enjoy them; and by forgiving their brother's offences, when revenge could no longer gratify their pride. But, if the definition I have given of Charity be true, which every page of the ſacred oracles confirms, it is evident, that Charity comprehends the whole of our duty to our fellow-creatures. Nay, not only ſo, but it even pre-ſuppoſes the love of God, that other great branch of our duty, for without the love of God, there can be no perfect love of man; ſo juſtly has St. Paul called Charity *the bond of perfectneſs*;

neſs; and, in another place, *the fulfilling of the law.*

THE truth of this definition is moreover placed beyond diſpute by St. Paul's noble deſcription of it, in the 13th chapter of his firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians; where he tells us, that if we had every natural and ſupernatural gift, and had not *charity*, we were nothing; and that if we ſtript ourſelves of all our poſſeſſions to feed the poor, and even died for the benefit of mankind, and had not *charity*, it would profit us nothing: where he ſhews us at large, that the affection, which we call *charity*, eradicates every vice, and produces and cheriſhes every virtue.

IT follows, therefore, that if any peculiar advantages are to be annexed to the practice of the duty of charity, they are not promiſed to the performance of any

 particular

particular part of our duty, but to the whole of it. It is true, indeed, that in ſome parts of the ſacred Scriptures, *forgiveneſs of our ſins* ſeems to be promiſed merely upon the condition of our forgiving our brethren their offences againſt us; and, in others, our Saviour ſeems to ſpeak, as if the chief enquiry at the great day of judgment would be concerning *alms-giving*. But in reſpect to theſe expreſſions, I ſhall obſerve in the firſt place, that it is a fundamental rule in the interpretation of the ſacred writings, not to make one or two doubtful expreſſions to ſpeak a ſenſe totally oppoſite and contradictory to the whole tenor of the other plain parts. Now, therefore, as in theſe paſſages it is by no means ſaid, that the performance of theſe particular duties ſhall atone for the non-performance of the reſt, and other parts of ſcripture plainly and clearly enjoin the practice of other duties,

theſe particular paſſages cannot reaſonably be interpreted to ſignify any thing more than this, that the performance of other duties will not entitle us to eternal happineſs without the practice of theſe likewiſe. But I ſhall, in the ſecond place, endeavour to ſhew further, that theſe very paſſages, and ſome others of the ſacred ſcriptures, do, in themſelves, neceſſarily imply the diſcharge of the whole of our duty, though they have been generally ſuppoſed to promiſe eternal happineſs to the performance of particular acts.

Now, when forgiveneſs of our own ſins is promiſed upon the condition of our forgiving the offences of others, is it ſaid, that the forgiving a few offences will entitle us to this ineſtimable benefit? No, ſo far from it, that upon Peter's aſking our bleſſed Saviour, *How often ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive*

 him?

him? till ſeven times? Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee till ſeven times, but untill ſeventy times ſeven. Not that our Saviour can be ſuppoſed to mean, that you muſt forgive your brother juſt ſuch a preciſe number of times, and you are not obliged to forgive him oftener; but plainly implying, by this expreſſion, that let your brother offend againſt you ever ſo often, you are ſtill obliged to forgive him. And again; is it ſaid, that the forgiveneſs of a number of offences againſt us a few times in our lives, or once for all upon a death-bed, will avail? No; but if your brother, if the ſame perſon treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, you muſt forgive him: a number of times which it is ſurely ſcarce poſſible for the ſame perſon to offend in *one* day! You, Sir, I dare to ſay, have already drawn the concluſion.

I would

I would deduce from theſe paſſages, that if a man is capable of forgiving the offences of others, ſo as to entitle himſelf, upon the conditions promiſed in the goſpel, to the forgiveneſs of his own ſins, it cannot be preſent, but muſt be paſt ſins which are meant; for ſuch a forbearance from a retaliation of injuries, and ſuch a readineſs of mind to forgive, as is here deſcribed, neceſſarily ſuppoſes that *perfect charity*, as is incompatible with the commiſſion of preſent ſins, or the doing an injury to our brother unprovoked, which every ſin but revenge preſuppoſes. And that in fact would we obtain forgiveneſs of our ſins, we muſt forſake them, and endeavour to acquire every Chriſtian perfection.

In reſpect to alms-giving, ſuppoſe I grant that in ſome places of ſcripture eternal happineſs is promiſed as its reward; yet no one, I preſume, will be ſo irrational as to maintain, that the mere act of giving

alms, whatever be the motive, whether it be vanity, or temporal intereſt of any kind, will entitle us to eternal happineſs. It can be only meant ſuch giving of alms as proceeds from that love to our fellow-creatures which is called Charity. If, then, eternal happineſs be promiſed to alms-giving, it is not promiſed to it as a particular act of duty, but as the effect of that general principle, which not only frees us from every willful ſin, but occaſions us to intend every poſſible good. And beſides, in that very paſſage which has been ſuppoſed to imply, that at the great day of retribution the chief enquiry will be concerning the performance of this particular duty, from theſe words of our bleſſed Saviour, *Then ſhall the King ſay unto thoſe on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I*

was

was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; *naked, and ye cloathed me*; is it not likewiſe added? *I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in*; *I was ſick, and ye viſited me*; *I was in priſon, and ye came unto me*: plainly implying, in this very paſſage, that the bleſſing was not promiſed merely to alms-giving, but to the perfect performance of all thoſe kind and brotherly offices, which proceed from the love of our neighbour as ourſelves, and which is inconſiſtent with any one actual ſin, and only conſiſtent with every poſſible virtue.

I MUST beg leave, Sir, to detain you ſtill ſome time longer, whilſt I endeavour to clear another important paſſage relative to charity, which has been variouſly interpreted; from which ſome have deduced conſequences favourable to vice, and which others have rather evaded by ſubtilty, than oppoſed by ſound reaſoning. The text is this:

this : " *And above all things have fervent* " *charity among yourſelves, for charity ſhall* " *cover the multitude of ſins.*" Or, as it ought rather to be tranſlated, " *Above all* " *things have fervent love among yourſelves;* " *for charity ſhall cover the multitude of* " *ſins.*" Or, if the word *charity* be inſerted inſtead of *love*, the words " *among your-* " *ſelves*" ſhould be omitted. The ſubject of controverſy relative to this text may be reduced to theſe heads :

1ſt. Whether the ſins, here ſaid to be covered, are paſt, preſent, or future ſins.

2dly. Whether they are the ſins of the charitable perſon, or of others.

3dly. Whether they are ſaid to be covered, or overlooked, or ſheltered from puniſhment, in the judgment of God or of men.

As

As to the firſt head, almoſt all the interpreters are agreed in ſuppoſing the ſins here meant, are preſent ſins. In reſpect to the other two, they diſagree.

Some agree in thinking, that the ſins here ſpoken of, are not the ſins of the charitable perſon, but of others; and diſagree in this, that ſome of them think it is meant in relation to the judgment of men; others, in reſpect to the judgment of God. The former interpret it thus: That we are exhorted, above all things, to have fervent charity, becauſe charity will induce us to pardon, or overlook, a multitude of our brother's offences. The latter think this to be the meaning of the text. Above all things have fervent charity, becauſe this will induce you to reclaim many ſinners, and this will occaſion the Deity to overlook *their* offences. But both theſe interpretations ſeem forced and far-

far-fetched, and, I may even venture to ſay, irrational. For ſurely it is incongruous to reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the inſpired Apoſtle would make uſe of this ſtrange argument to incite men to become charitable, that their charity would induce them to overlook the multitude of their brother's offences againſt *them*, or that it would be the means of God's pardoning their brother's ſins againſt *him*.

OTHERS ſeem to agree in thinking, that the ſins here meant, are the ſins of the charitable perſon, but they likewiſe diſagree in this, that ſome think it is to be underſtood in reſpect to the judgment of God, others in reſpect to the judgment of men. † The latter think, that we are exhorted, above all things, to have fervent charity, becauſe this is a virtue which renders its poſſeſſors beloved by men, that they will, for its ſake, overlook a multitude

† Sherlock

tude of faults. The former think the meaning is this, that charity is ſo amiable a virtue in the ſight of God, that for its ſake God will overlook, or that this virtue will ſhelter from puniſhment, a multitude of vices. This is the moſt common interpretation, and the others I have mentioned ſeem to have been invented only on purpoſe to evade the bad conſequences deducible from this. Here is indeed, upon the ſuppoſition of the truth of either of theſe interpretations, a motive urged to induce us to become charitable; but I dare to ſay you immediately ſaw, upon my firſt mention of theſe interpretations, that neither of them could poſſibly be right, for this plain reaſon; becauſe as ſin conſiſts in injuring, or deſigning to injure, our fellow-creatures, and charity in not only abſtaining from doing them an injury, but likewiſe in endeavouring to promote their happineſs to the utmoſt extent

extent of our power, it is impoſſible that a truly charitable perſon ſhould have a multitude of ſins. But others think that if St. Peter ſpeak in this place of the charitable perſon's ſin being covered, he means to ſay what our Lord himſelf affirmed, "*If ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, "your heavenly Father will alſo forgive "you.*" As if St. Peter had ſaid, "*Above "all things have fervent charity, for this, "by inducing you to overlook your brother's "offences againſt you, will induce God to "overlook your ſins againſt him.*" Now, admitting this interpretation to be juſt, it follows, from what I have before ſaid upon the conditions on which our ſins are to be forgiven, that charity only covers a multitude of paſt ſins, by rendering us perfect at preſent. But it is by no means probable that this was St. Peter's meaning; for can we ſuppoſe that an inſpired apoſtle would at any time, when he was endeavouring

vouring to perſuade men to the practice of any virtue, omit the principal part of his argument, and indeed that part, without which his aſſertion was no argument? And more eſpecially can we ſuppoſe that he would leave this to be inferred at a time, when, by his own account, he was writing to men but juſt converted to the belief of, and conſequently not likely to be fully inſtructed in, the practical doctrines of Chriſtianity.

I WILL now, Sir, ſubmit to your conſideration, what appears to me to be the true meaning of this much diſputed text; and if it will bear the teſt of your examination, will, beſides its more immediate uſes, tend to evince this important truth; that a man of the meaneſt abilities will be more able, by the attentive peruſal of a whole goſpel or epiſtle, to underſtand any difficult text, than a man of the beſt abilities,

abilities, who confines his attention to the conſideration of that particular paſſage.

THE apoſtle, in the preceding chapter, after an exhortation to the diſcharge of ſome particular duties, concludes with an exhortation to goodneſs in general; and he continues the ſame in the preſent chapter, which he begins thus: "*Foraſmuch* "*then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the* "*fleſh, arm yourſelves likewiſe with the* "*ſame mind; for he that hath ſuffered in* "*the fleſh hath ceaſed from ſin, that he no* "*longer ſhould live the reſt of his time in* "*the fleſh, to the luſts of men, but to the* "*will of God. For the time paſt of our* "*life may ſuffice to have wrought the will* "*of the Gentiles, when we walked in laſci-* "*viouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revelling,* "*banquetting, and abominable idolatries;* "*wherein they think it ſtrange that ye run* "*not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot,*

"*ſpeaking*

" *ſpeaking evil of you; who ſhall give an*
" *account to him that is ready to judge the*
" *quick and the dead. For this cauſe was*
" *the goſpel preached alſo to them that are*
" *dead, that they might be judged according*
" *to men in the fleſh, but live according to*
" *God in the ſpirit. But the end of all*
" *things is at hand: be ye therefore ſober,*
" *and watch unto prayer; and above all*
" *things have fervent charity or love among*
" *yourſelves, for charity ſhall cover the mul-*
" *titude of ſins.*"

WHAT now can be more evident from the context, than that the reaſon why theſe Chriſtians were exhorted, above all things, to have fervent charity, was, that it would cover or ſhelter from puniſhment the multitude, not of others, but their own, not of their preſent, but their paſt ſins; not in the judgment of men, but of God. But ſo far is St. Peter from giving

giving encouragement to Chriſtians, to hope to make an atonement for the preſent commiſſion of ſin, by any particular actions called charitable, ſuch as almsgiving, or forgiveneſs of injuries; (charity always implying an affection of the mind) that even the *paſt* ſins, here ſaid to be covered, were not the ſins of theſe perſons whilſt Chriſtians, but their ſins before they were converted to Chriſtianity. And the whole of the exhortation is to this effect: "Before you were converted to Chriſtia- "nity you were guilty of all kinds of "wickedneſs; now you are become Chri- "ſtians watch and pray, but above all "things have fervent charity, for this is "the ſum of Chriſtianity; this manifeſts "your repentance of your former wicked- "neſs, is a proof of a new life, and will "therefore entitle you to a remiſſion of "your paſt ſins." And that this was the ſenſe in which our tranſlators underſtood this

this text, is evident from their inſertion of the particle *the*, which plainly implies that they referred the ſins here ſpoken of to the ſins before mentioned, elſe, why was this particle inſerted in this place? or, why was it not inſerted in the laſt verſe of St. James's epiſtle? *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth the ſinner from the error of his ways, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and hide* a *multitude of ſins.* Καλυψει πληθος αμαρτιων, the original expreſſion, being exactly the ſame in both paſſages.

HAVING mentioned this paſſage in St. James's epiſtle, I muſt intreat your patience a few minutes longer, whilſt I ſay ſomething upon this likewiſe, which has been as much miſtaken, and as variouſly interpreted, as that in St. Peter's. Now, though the ſins ſaid to be covered in St.

Peter's epiſtle, were ſins committed before the ſinners were converted to Chriſtianity, yet the former ſins of Chriſtians may as much be ſheltered from puniſhment by charity, or a perfect preſent obedience, as theſe mens were. And, indeed, in a large ſenſe, charity may be ſaid to cover a multitude of future ſins, that is, charity may ſhelter a man from the puniſhment due to a multitude of ſins, which he would have committed had he not had charity.

St. James's epiſtle was written when a number of Chriſtians became apoſtates, on account of perſecution; and therefore I take St. James's meaning to be this: "Brethren, if any of you apoſtatize "from Chriſtianity, and one re-convert "you, let the converter know, that by "this act he not only ſaves from perdi-"tion the ſoul of the converted perſon, "but it evinces in him ſuch a fervent

"love

" love for the ſouls of his fellow-crea-
" tures, for to undertake the converſion
" of an apoſtate in this time of perſecu-
" tion; and it is ſo certain a ſign of his
" being a true Chriſtian, that he may
" depend upon it, his former ſins will be
" blotted out, and he will be ſheltered
" from the puniſhment due to them."

It is therefore evident, from all theſe paſſages, that in vain ſhall we hope to atone for the commiſſion of any preſent ſin, by the practice of any particular virtues; and that would we be partakers of the promiſes of the goſpel, we muſt carefully cheriſh that general principle of duty, which, by making us forſake ſin for the future, will ſhelter from puniſhment our paſt offences.

I am, Sir, ſufficiently ſenſible of the ridicule with which this *ſermonical* letter

would be treated by *modern fine gentlemen*, who eſteem infidelity as a proof of genius, and miſtake ſerioufneſs and dullneſs for ſynonimous terms; but to *you* I will not even make an apology for its *length*.

LETTER

LETTER III.

I SHALL, Sir, begin this letter with offering to your examination the axioms which I promiſed, relative to charitable inſtitutions.

Axiom I.

That is the *moſt* charitable inſtitution, which is deſigned to comprehend the welfare of the ſouls, the bodies, and the fortunes of men.

Axiom II.

As the welfare of the ſoul is of greater importance to man than the welfare of his body, and conſequently likewiſe than of his fortune; an inſtitution, which is deſigned to contribute to the welfare of the

firſt, is a more charitable inſtitution than that which is intended to contribute to either of the other.

Axiom III.

No inſtitution is to be encouraged, tho' it may relieve thoſe individuals for whoſe benefit it was deſigned, which is injurious to the reſt of mankind.

Axiom IV.

Consequently, therefore, from the preceding axiom, as a ſpirit of induſtry is neceſſary to the well-being of ſociety, whatever inſtitution is intended to contribute to the fortunes of men, which is an encouragement to idleneſs, however charitable the deſign of the inſtitution might be, the inſtitution is injurious.

Axiom V.

But, it is no juſt objection to an inſtitution, which relieves thoſe individuals for whoſe benefit it was deſigned, that it is not *beneficial* to the reſt of mankind; tho' that inſtitution is beſt which is beneficial in both reſpects.

Axiom VI.

Consequently, from the preceding axiom, it is no juſt objection to an inſtitution, which was deſigned to contribute to the welfare of the ſouls of men, that it does not likewiſe make them induſtrious; though that inſtitution would be better, which equally contributes to the welfare of men's ſouls, and at the ſame time occaſioned induſtry.

Axiom VII.

It is no juſt objection to a charitable inſtitution at preſent eſtabliſhed, that one might be better calculated to promote the ſame deſign; and it is our duty to contribute to an imperfect inſtitution till one more perfect is eſtabliſhed.

Axiom VIII.

We ought to be particularly careful to diſtinguiſh between the deſign of an inſtitution, and its perverſion; and it is not allowable to argue from the latter againſt the former.

Axiom IX.

It is no juſt objection to a charitable inſtitution, that the motives of all the promoters and encouragers of it are not charitable.

Axiom X.

We ought not to attribute thoſe bad conſequences, which ariſe from a want of putting the laws into execution, to a defect in the laws themſelves.

Axiom XI.

Where any evil ariſes from a neglect in the execution of the laws, an inſtitution calculated to remove or alleviate the evil deſerves encouragement, till the laws are better executed.

I shall now proceed to the conſideration of our author's obſervations.

In the beginning of his ſecond paragraph he ſays, "Charity to be beneficial muſt "be confined to proper objects, none "ought to be relieved but ſuch as are "deſtitute

" deſtitute of money, and incapacitated " by diſorders and infirmities from la- " bour."

THIS paragraph implies, that charity only relates to the bodies and fortunes of men; but the falſity of this aſſertion is ſufficiently apparent, from the definition and axioms premiſed. Beſides, did the *whole* of charity conſiſt in contributing to the welfare of the bodies and fortunes of men, it by no means follows, that " none " ought to be relieved but ſuch as are " deſtitute of money, and incapacitated " from labour." For let us ſuppoſe the following caſe; That an honeſt induſtrious man is ſo reduced, by unavoidable accidents, from affluent circumſtances, that, after the payment of his debts, he has only a very inconſiderable ſum, not a ſufficiency to enable him to re-aſſume his former buſineſs; and ſhould a number of gentlemen

gentlemen lend, or give him a ſum of money, to encreaſe his capital, and to enable him again to enter into trade; would not this be real charity? though it cannot be ſaid that the man "was deſti-"tute of money, or incapacitated from "labour."

FURTHER, it is evident, that a ſubſcription of this kind would not only be beneficial to the individual, but it would be likewiſe very uſeful to the public; for without this ſubſcription what would be the conſequence? the man muſt maintain himſelf by his own labour; but, by means of the ſubſcription, he is enabled to employ numbers: and it is very ſurprizing, that in *this* nation no aſſociation of this kind ſhould have been formed, which, by giving or lending a ſum of money, without intereſt, to an honeſt and induſtrious, though unfortunate and broken tradeſman, might enable him, with further induſtry,

induſtry, to live again in plenty, and become beneficial to the public: *in a nation*, which owes all its grandeur, power, and riches, to its trade, and in which charity is ſuppoſed to be ſo abundant, that our Author has attempted to prove this paradox, that all the idleneſs, and almoſt all the wickedneſs, of this kingdom, flow from its pure and beneficial ſource.

THERE are ſocieties in Holland, ſomewhat like what I have been propoſing; the general deſign of which is worthy the imitation of England, though the manner in which they are conducted is liable to ſome objections; for as in Holland, every ſubſcriber, if he fail, is intitled to the benefit of theſe inſtitutions, they ſeem to be no reward to induſtry and honeſty, but may frequently, on the contrary, be the cauſe of diſhoneſty, and induce a man to be a knave, and a bankrupt, in order to become rich.

AFTER

AFTER this miſtake in defining the proper objects of charity, our Author next aſſerts, that "the injury to the community ariſing from the compulſatory "laws, to keep all the poor, who prefer "idleneſs to induſtry, and from the too "numerous charities, is fixing in the labouring people an idea that miſery cannot be an attendant on poverty; the conſequence of which is, that they who formerly did, and would now work ſix days in a week, in order to provide, not only for the immediate neceſſaries of life, but for their wives lying-in, ſickneſs, and other expenſive occaſions, ſeldom labour four, ſpending the gain of the laſt week before they think of getting more."

IN the firſt place, I muſt confeſs, Sir, I cannot conceive but that all laws and inſtitutions for the relief of poverty, muſt be

be ſo far from fixing in any perſon an idea that miſery cannot be the attendant of poverty, that they appear to me neceſſarily to fix in every body an idea of the contrary.

But, ſecondly, ſo far from there being any "compulſatory laws, to keep all the "poor, who prefer idleneſs to induſtry;" if the Author will conſult the 43d of Elizabeth, he will find, that thoſe poor who refuſe to work are to be committed to priſon. It muſt indeed be granted, that, from a neglect in the execution of thoſe laws which relate to the employment of the poor, great encouragement is given to idleneſs; and I am ſorry to obſerve to you, that I have myſelf ſeen the contributions of pariſhes ſo miſerably abuſed, that the idle have been relieved, and relief refuſed to the induſtrious upon the ſickneſs of a wife or child, for this very reaſon,

ſon, becauſe they were induſtrious, and could maintain themſelves and families when in health; and I have too great reaſon to fear that this is no uncommon but frequent caſe. But if our Author means to argue from a neglect in the execution of the poor's laws, againſt the laws themſelves, he contradicts the 10th axiom; and, if this is not his meaning, his aſſertion is founded upon a fact which he ſuppoſes to be true, but is entirely falſe, viz. *that the laws relating to the poor have not provided for their employment*; and as the ſuppoſition is itſelf falſe, the conſequence, if rightly deduced from it, cannot be true.

As to the *too numerous charities* having the effects here mentioned, if they were *too numerous*, ſuch indeed might be the conſequences; but that *they are too numerous*, is the very point which the author ought

ought to have proved in his pamphlet; which, on the contrary, he has taken for granted in the very beginning of it.

WHAT I have already ſaid would be a ſufficient anſwer to our Author, as I have ſhewn, that he has by no means proved the modern charitable inſtitutions to be the cauſe of the idleneſs, and the increaſe of the number of the poor; and it is upon the ſuppoſition only of the truth of this point, that he attempts to ſhew "the "fatal effects of the preſent exceſs of "public charities to a trading nation." But not contenting myſelf with this, and the mention I have made of one conſiderable cauſe of theſe evils, I ſhall, Sir, proceed ſtill to point out ſome other cauſes, which will fully demonſtrate, that it is not in conſequence of the general proviſion for the poor, nor of the preſent charitable inſtitutions, "that they who formerly did,

"and

" and now would work ſix days in a " week, in order to provide, not only for " the immediate neceſſaries of life, but " for their wives lying-in, ſickneſs, and " other expenſive occaſions, ſeldom labour " four, ſpending the gain of the laſt week " before they think of getting more." And they will likewiſe prove, that our Author has fallen into a very common error of miſtaking a collateral effect for a cauſe. For it will appear, that though the circumſtances mentioned by our Author in this paſſage might be formerly the happy conſequences of the induſtry of the lower claſs of mankind, yet they were not the motives which cauſed them to become induſtrious; and, therefore, that it is not the erection of hoſpitals, but the ceſſation of the cauſes of induſtry I ſhall mention, which likewiſe occaſioned the ceſſation of theſe conſequences.

LETTER IV.

IT is undoubtedly evident, that every wiſe legiſlature will endeavour either wholly to remove all temptations to the commiſſion of ſuch actions as are prejudicial to a ſtate; or, if this be not practicable, to leſſen them as much as poſſible. The method of effecting the former is, to remove all opportunities of committing theſe actions; the latter may be effected two ways, either in the manner juſt mentioned, by promulgating a puniſhment, and by this means deterring men from the commiſſion of them.

In reſpect to idleneſs, our legiſlature has uſed both theſe methods. For, as to the latter, I have before obſerved, this nation is ſo far from having any compulſa-

tory

tory laws to keep all the poor, who prefer idleneſs to induſtry, that the laws have provided for the puniſhment of the idle; and, as few are idle merely from a diſlike to labour, but from love of ſome fancied pleaſure, ſuch as drinking and gaming, our legiſlature has wiſely attempted to cut off the opportunities of committing theſe actions, by promulgating puniſhments againſt ale-houſe-keepers, &c. for the permiſſion of theſe offences, and has likewiſe endeavoured to deter men from their commiſſion by the promulgation of a puniſhment againſt thoſe who ſhall be found guilty of them: but as theſe laws remain as totally unexecuted, in moſt places, as if they had never been framed; drunkenneſs and gaming continue to produce idleneſs, and conſequently an increaſe of the number of the poor, as powerfully as if no ſuch laws had ever exiſted. Yet there are two vices which more demand the vigilance and

attention of the executors of the laws than theſe, ſince one is the cauſe of beggary and of robbery, and the other is the parent of all vices.

But, beſides theſe incitements to idleneſs, there are other diverſions, though innocent in themſelves, which, by tempting the lower claſs of mankind to ſpend their money, and neglect their work, are very prejudicial to ſociety, I mean plays and ſhews of every kind; the former of which muſt indeed be allowed to be truly rational entertainments, being, when well conducted, either uſeful ſatires on folly, or leſſons of morality, and to which the legiſlature could have no objection, if they were confined to the middling and higher claſſes of life; but when even theſe diverſions become acceſſible to the loweſt claſs of mankind, they are, for the reaſons juſt given, very injurious to the public.

lic. The legiſlature has, therefore, with the greateſt propriety, provided, that all players, except ſuch as are licenſed by the Lord Chamberlain, and all exhibiters of ſhews, ſhould be deemed and puniſhed as vagrants; but theſe laws are likewiſe left unexecuted, and the evils which they were deſigned to prevent, are by no other means averted.

From theſe cauſes, together with the high wages of ſome kinds of mechanics and manufactures, (which are ſufficient to furniſh them with ſome of the conveniencies, as well as neceſſaries of life, from little work) proceed, I dare to aver, that indolence of the lower claſs of mankind in the beginning of a week, ſo much complained of by our Author, and by him attributed to the modern charitable inſtitutions. From hence it proceeds, to uſe our Author's own words, "that they

" who formerly did, and would now work
" ſix days in a week, ſeldom labour four,
" ſpending the gain of the laſt week,
" before they think of getting more."
And I am, Sir, the more firmly perſuaded of this by theſe two circumſtances: 1ſt, Becauſe where the cauſes I have mentioned do not exiſt, there likewiſe the effect does not; for in the country, where the wages of the labouring part of mankind are lower than in cities, and where there are not the ſame temptations to expenſive diverſions as in large towns, there this indolence is not ſo obſervable. 2dly, Becauſe this indolence is too evident to be denied, and too prejudicial not to be lamented in a certain trading city, (one of the largeſt in England) in our neighbourhood, where, through the vigilance of the magiſtrates and principal inhabitants, its hoſpitals, infirmaries, workhouſes, and houſes of correction, are excellently

cellently regulated for the relief of the deſerving poor, and the puniſhment of the flagitious.

THERE are ſtill other extenſive cauſes of idleneſs, which ought by no means to be omitted; ſome of which relate to the country, the other to trading towns.

THE firſt has, I believe, been already obſerved, but has been very little, or not at all, attended to by thoſe who ought to prevent the grievance; I mean the aggregation of a number of ſmall farms to make one large farm; a method the moſt efficacious which the greateſt ingenuity could poſſibly have planned for the prevention of induſtry, and the increaſe of the number of the poor.

FORMERLY a labourer was enabled, by induſtry and frugality, to obtain one of

theſe little farms, and when in poſſeſſion of this, incited by the hopes of obtaining, in ſome future time, one more valuable, the ſame induſtry and frugality would continue; and thus would he progreſſively aſcend, beginning perhaps with a farm of 12 *l.* a year, and ending his life in one of 100, or 150 *l.* this has been performed by ſeveral, and when this was practicable, it is evident induſtry had a reward perpetually in view; now this is no longer poſſible, induſtry and frugality are robbed of their rewards, and conſequently labourers are deprived of their motives to the practice of theſe virtues.

It may perhaps be ſaid, that although theſe motives are removed, yet inducements to theſe virtues can never be wanting, ſince induſtry, and a frugal management of the produce of his labour, will enable a man to ſupport himſelf without the

the diſgrace of a pariſh maintenance, when age and infirmities attack him. But the general poſſibility of this may very reaſonably be denied; for what can we ſuppoſe a labourer to ſave out of 20*l.* a year, (which indeed few of them earn) after he has paid his rent, bought fuel at the price it now bears, maintained himſelf, his wife, and four children, (the leaſt number of children which each labourer will be found to have, upon an average) in cloaths and proviſions, at the preſent price, paid the expences of their wives lyings-in, their own and childrens illneſſes, beſides many other misfortunes? Granting, however, the general poſſibility of this, what is the power of this motive in compariſon with the other?

In the firſt place, the generality of mankind ſeldom extend their views to a great diſtance, and when they are in health and

and ſtrength, are not very thoughtful of days of age, ſickneſs, and ſorrow; and, in the preſent caſe, the reward of induſtry is removed to the utmoſt poſſible diſtance; in the former, the advantage propoſed was always near. If it be ſaid, that the acquiſition of a large farm, which was the principal object labourers had formerly in view, was likewiſe removed to a great diſtance, ſince they could not hope to obtain one of theſe till towards the cloſe of life; I anſwer, that whoever is acquainted with the human mind, will think it very probable; or whoever is not, may, by converſing with ſome of theſe induſtrious and fortunate men, know it to be certain, that at their firſt ſetting out into life, they only thought of the happineſs which would attend the poſſeſſion of one of the ſmalleſt farms; and it was not till they were in poſſeſſion of one of theſe, that they extended their hopes to the acquiſition

tion of a larger; every advance up the ſteep of life preſenting new objects to their ſight, and convincing them, that there was no greater diſtance between the place from which they at firſt ſet out, and the objects they had there ſeen, and long ſince paſs'd, than between the place where they ſtood at that time, and the objects diſcernible from thence.

Besides, granting, in the ſecond place, that the principal objects of theſe mens purſuits were removed to the ſame diſtance with thoſe of labourers at this time, yet then it muſt be confeſſed, that the former had all the motives to excite them to induſtry and frugality which the latter poſſeſs, and one which the latter want, which was moreover attended with this additional advantage, that almoſt every exertion of theſe qualities received an immediate reward; it muſt, therefore, neceſſarily follow,

low, that by the annihilation of the ſmall farms, gentlemen have deſtroyed the labourer's ſtrongeſt inducement to induſtry and frugality: the conſequence of which muſt be, however unwilling gentlemen are to ſee it, or ſeeing to confeſs it, that they burden their large farms with the maintenance of a number of poor, when, on the contrary, if the ſmall farms ſubſiſted, the gentlemen would only have the expence of repairs, and theſe very men would maintain themſelves, and contribute to the ſupport of their landlords.

I HAVE hitherto conſidered only the fatal effects of the accumulation of farms, as it encreaſes the number of the poor, by the diſcouragement of induſtry; but by other means, it likewiſe produces the ſame effect.

AND

And firſt, as even upon the ſuppoſition, that it was no diſcouragement to induſtry, yet it muſt neceſſarily augment the number of the poor by an encreaſe of labourers, and of the loweſt claſs of mechanics, who in ſickneſs, age, and infirmities, will not be able to ſupport themſelves.

Secondly, as it facilitates the farmers in times of ſcarcity, to keep up the price of corn.

Thirdly, as it conſtantly occaſions a high price of ſeveral kinds of proviſion; both from their ſcarcity, as ſome kinds of proviſion are chiefly the produce of ſmall farms, and likewiſe as the fewer farms there are, the greater will be the demand for them; and the greater this be, the higher will be their rents, and the higher the

the rents are, the dearer muſt the farmer ſell his commodities.

FOURTHLY, as it propagates that ſpecies of luxury which is prejudicial to a ſtate. This, perhaps, wants ſome explanation, for luxury is one of thoſe many complex terms much uſed, but little underſtood. The word, from which it is derived, in the Latin language, ſeems originally only to have ſignified abundance; but as the Romans were a military, not a trading people, and their form of government republican, not monarchical, that an abundance of the conveniencies of life, or of things not abſolutely neceſſary, muſt be inconſiſtent with their particular genius and conſtitution is evident, and the reaſon, therefore, why this word acquired a bad ſignification amongſt them is very obvious: but, on account of the difference in the conſtitutions

conſtitutions of the two nations, there is no reaſon that it ſhould retain its bad ſignification in our language. The queſtion is only, When does this abundance, or luxury of individuals, become vicious? The anſwer is, When it is injurious to ſociety; and it becomes injurious, when it impairs their health, prevents their relief of the aged and infirm, ruins their fortunes, and incapacitates them for the payment of their debts. Theſe two laſt ſpecies of luxury, therefore, neceſſarily preſuppoſes extravagance, the oppoſite virtue to which vice is frugality; a virtue, which men were induced to cultivate when ſmall farms ſubſiſted, but, together with them, its ſeeds were eradicated.

To the circumſtances already mentioned, as productive of the increaſe of the poor in the country, I muſt likewiſe add three other very viſible and very powerful cauſes.

1ſt,

1ſt, The great price of fuel at preſent: this is a fact ſo well known, and its conſequences are ſo obvious, that it is unneceſſary to ſay any thing further upon this head.

2dly, The vaſt decreaſe in the number of gentry; for the accumulation of eſtates ſeem to bear an exact proportion to the augmentation of farms.

3dly, The abſence of the remainder of the gentlemen from their country ſeats for the greater part of the year.

THAT theſe two laſt circumſtances are likewiſe conſiderable cauſes, is evident from hence; the greater number of gentlemen there are in the country, the greater number of labourers will, by their private contributions, be kept from a pariſh maintenance; and the more gentlemen

men there are, the more employment there will be for labourers; for one quarter of the year, agriculture will not furniſh the numbers with work, who are fully employed the reſt of the year; during this time, therefore, when there were many gentlemen, many labourers were employed in works of ornament; whereas now, in many pariſhes, it happens, that ſeveral labourers muſt be either entirely without employment, and burthen themſelves during this time with a number of debts, which they are ſcarce able afterwards to diſcharge; or the farmers taking advantage of the neceſſities of theſe poor people, make them work for much leſs than their uſual wages.

ANOTHER cauſe of idleneſs, and of the encreaſe of the poor, of which I muſt take notice, and which relates to trading towns,

is this, that although there is a vaſt encreaſe of trade in this kingdom within the laſt century, yet it is become more of a monopoly.

In one of the largeſt trading cities in England, fifty or ſixty years ſince, there were four or five hundred manufacturers, all ſubſtantial tradeſmen, and nearly upon an equality with each other; at preſent the chief part of the trade is in very few hands. Formerly a man with a very ſmall capital might begin buſineſs, and by induſtry and frugality, acquire a handſome fortune; now, none but thoſe who have very large capitals can enter into trade, and the others are neceſſitated to become their ſervants. The conſequence of which is, that whereas *many* formerly acquired moderate fortunes, a very *few* now obtain exorbitant riches; and all the reſt being only

only placed juſt above want, muſt by ſickneſs, and other accidents, neceſſarily encreaſe the number of the poor.

THE evil here pointed out, ſeems to be one of thoſe general inconveniencies, which the All-wiſe Governor of the univerſe has, for the wiſeſt purpoſes, permitted as alloys to great advantages. It ſeems to hold univerſally true, that commerce is, in its infancy, more favorable to induſtry, than in its maturity. For there is always ſome time, between the encreaſe of money which trade brings into a kingdom, and its conſequent augmentation of the price of commodities; during this time, therefore, every one employed in trade muſt neceſſarily grow rich; but as theſe advantages will induce many to enter into trade, ſcarcely any will acquire exorbitant riches, becauſe though their profits are great, the trade carried on by each, will

be but ſmall. But as trade increaſes, the value of money decreaſes. Many, therefore, monied men, rather than live upon the low intereſt of their fortunes, employ it in trade, and in great meaſure monopolize it, by carrying it on for ſmaller profits, than thoſe with ſmaller capitals can afford.

BESIDES, on account of the feudal inſtitutions, trade was at firſt in this and the neighbouring nations deſpiſed by thoſe who were in poſſeſſion of eſtates, and they therefore, who had no fortunes, were left unmoleſted to reap the advantages of it, and undoubtedly great numbers would eagerly embrace this opportunity for the acquiſition of riches. But in time, thoſe who before deſpiſed trade as a mean employment, begin to be ſenſible of its value, and the intereſt of their fortunes being conſiderably leſſened, and the price of

of every neceſſary and convenience of life greatly increaſed, they now ſeek for trade as the means to luxury; and their luxury tending ſtill further to increaſe the price of every commodity, to which the wages of workmen of all kinds conſtantly bear a proportion, men of ſmall capitals are ſtill further incapacitated from entering into buſineſs. Fatal prognoſtication of the decay of trade! But were not the advantages of trade allayed with theſe inconveniencies, wherever it had once obtained poſſeſſion, there it muſt for ever have remained; but, by theſe means, the Omniſcient Diſpoſer of all events, has cauſed trade to be continually removing from one part of a kingdom to another, till at laſt commerce expands her ſails, and reaches ſome other clime, where poverty receives her with open arms, and frugality, for a time, courts her reſidence.

I FORBEAR to take notice of any other evil conſequences from theſe circumſtances, than the increaſe of idleneſs, and of the number of the poor, as no other are immediately relative to my ſubject; but there is one ſo ſelf-evident as to require no mention, "That great inequality of "fortunes are deſtructive of liberty:" and perhaps ſome future politician may, from the example of the Engliſh nation, teach his countrymen, that trade is, in its infancy, the guardian of liberty, by producing an equality of fortunes; but, in its maturity, the deſtroyer of it, by occaſioning an inequality.

THE circumſtances I have mentioned, appear to me, Sir, to be the real cauſes of the idleneſs of the lower claſs of mankind, and of the vaſt increaſe in the number of the poor within theſe few years; effects ſo much, and with ſo much reaſon lamented,

lamented, and which, therefore, every one ought to endeavour, with the utmoſt induſtry, to remove. But our Author ſeems to have fallen into a very common error, the miſtake of an effect for a cauſe; for the preſent charitable inſtitutions are not the cauſe of the increaſe of the poor, but are erected in conſequence of this circumſtance; and therefore, what our Author, through the whole of his pamphlet, eſteems as a proof of their inutility and injury to this nation, is that very circumſtance which makes them neceſſary and beneficial.

It muſt not however be ſuppoſed that I mean to deny, that inſtitutions, which bear the name of charitable, when injudiciouſly planned, or improperly executed, may tend ſtill further to increaſe the number of the poor. This I allow to be poſſible, and ſtill further confeſs, that this may be the effect of one or two of the

preſent in London; but then, on the other ſide, it muſt be allowed to be a very inconſiderable cauſe amidſt ſuch a variety of others.

Let us now ſee whether our Author has been more ſucceſsful in demonſtrating the iniquity of theſe inſtitutions. To prove this, he ſays, in page the fifth, "Charity "is the maſk, private emolument the real "motive with their promoters; the pre-"tence is to aſſiſt the poor, the true "deſign is to make an advantageous and "profitable place for themſelves." But, before this can be admitted as a proof, we muſt aſk, whether, by the word *promoters*, our Author means all the contributors to theſe inſtitutions? or, whether only thoſe who were the firſt inſtitutors of them? If the former, then this aſſertion, which was deſigned as a proof, is not true; for no one can deny, that many of the contributors

contributors are actuated by truly noble charitable motives. If the latter, then indeed the aſſertion may be true; but ſtill it is no juſt objection to theſe inſtitutions, as appears from the 9th axiom, unleſs he can ſhew, that the money contributed to the inſtitution, is purloined by the inſtitutors.

After theſe unſucceſsful attempts to prove theſe inſtitutions unneceſſary, detrimental, and iniquitous, our Author, in page the 10th, arraigns general proviſions, of having baniſhed the beſt kinds of charity; for, ſays he, "Old Engliſh hoſpita-"lity, and private benevolences, are heard "of no more." This accuſation is not indeed ſo henious as the preceding, but we ſhall not, I apprehend, find it ſupported by any ſtronger proofs: for this aſſertion will admit of two negations; 1ſt, It may be denied, that general proviſions have baniſhed

baniſhed the old Engliſh hoſpitality, and private benevolences. 2dly, It may be denied, that theſe are the beſt kinds of charity.

1ſt, It is not a general proviſion for the poor, which has baniſhed the old Engliſh hoſpitality; but a total change in the cuſtoms and conſtitutions of our country. The moſt ſavage and unpoliſhed nations are in general moſt given to hoſpitality; and this, if it be a virtue, is at preſent chiefly to be found in the vileſt nations upon earth. In uncultivated countries, where no public places of entertainment are erected for travellers, hoſpitality, or (as this word implies, according to its original acceptation) the civil reception and accommodation of ſtrangers, is abſolutely neceſſary for mutual convenience; it is private intereſt which throws open the gates of theſe people to the traveller, and

and the ſtranger. When, therefore, a country becomes cultivated, and public inns are built for the accomodation of travellers, hoſpitality ceaſes to be practiſed, becauſe it is no longer a private advantage; and it likewiſe ceaſes to be a virtue, becauſe it is no longer uſeful to the public. But the old Engliſh hoſpitality was ſomewhat different from this; it did not ſo much conſiſt in opening their gates to the ſtranger, as in welcoming their neighbours to their tables.

This kind of hoſpitality owed its birth in this kingdom to two cauſes, one of which is common to all uncultivated countries, the want of money, or a common ſtandard for the exchange of commodities. The landlord receiving his rent in kind, can only ſhew his charity by feeding the poor at his own table. The other was the ariſtocratical power, which formerly prevailed

vailed in this nation; and when theſe cauſes ceaſed to exiſt, hoſpitality likewiſe in great meaſure vaniſhed; though this indeed, like moſt other cuſtoms, did not entirely ceaſe with the cauſes which produced it, till commerce introducing ſocial pleaſures and diverſions, which can no where be enjoyed in ſo great a perfection as in the metropolis, depopulated the country. Theſe are the cauſes, (not the general proviſion for the poor) of the extirpation of the old Engliſh hoſpitality.

As to private benevolences, that a general proviſion does in ſome meaſure diminiſh them, may ſafely be granted, and ſurely it would be wonderful if this was not the caſe; for if there is *as much* neceſſity for private benevolences when there ſubſiſts a general proviſion for the poor, as when there is none eſtabliſhed, of what uſe is the general proviſion? Some neceſ-

ſity

ſity indeed will always remain for the private contributions of the charitable, under the beſt and wiſeſt inſtitutions the wit of man can poſſibly deviſe for the general maintenance of the poor; for all general laws muſt ever be attended with particular inconveniencies, and it is the duty of men of fortune, by their private contributions, to endeavour to remedy theſe particular inconveniencies, which reſult from the poor's laws; this is what will be ever neceſſary, and which is, at preſent, in a great meaſure performed: and I am ſure, did I aſſent to the aſſertion of this writer, "that "private benevolences are heard of no "more," I muſt be totally ignorant of the perſon to whom I am writing, and deaf to the grateful ſentiments of the poor around him.

2dly, I am to examine whether the old Engliſh hoſpitality, and private benevolences,

volences, are the beſt kinds of charity; but ſurely no proof is wanting, that the poor will be more amply provided for, (and no reaſon can be aſſigned why they ſhould not be as well managed) when the uncharitable, as well as the charitable, are obliged by law to contribute to their ſupport, than when their maintenance was left only to voluntary contributions. And this point I am willing to leave to the determination of our Author himſelf; for this very writer, who in this place aſſerts, that "the old Engliſh hoſpitality, and private "benevolences, are the beſt kinds of "charity," at the latter end of his pamphlet attempts to ſketch out a new plan for the *general proviſion* of the poor; take it, Sir, in his own words. "I ſhall not "(ſays he) enter into farther conſiderations "of any particular charities, but ſubmit "a few thoughts upon the *neceſſity* and "poſſibility of making one general pro-

"viſion

" viſion for the poor, and *ſuppreſſing and* " *prohibiting all private charities.*" If, therefore, our Author thinks, that it is *neceſſary to ſuppreſs and prohibit all private charities, and make one general proviſion*, it is evident that he will not allow the old Engliſh hoſpitality, and private benevolences, to be the beſt kinds of charity.

OTHER writers, beſides our Author, have urged objections to general proviſions, and have thought that it would be better to leave the poor to be maintained by the private contributions of the charitable, than by a proviſion eſtabliſhed by law. But it would be ſurprizing, that ſome of theſe objections ſhould ever have been made, as many of them, if they prove any thing, prove equally againſt private benevolences, as againſt public proviſions; was it not a very common ſpecies of falſe reaſoning, for writers to urge

urge difficulties againſt the opinions of others, which it is equally difficult to account for upon their own principles. Theſe therefore deſerve no notice, ſuch as "the "difficulty of determining who are real "paupers, and therefore proper objects "of charity;" and "the difficulty of "fixing the degree of charity to which "they are entitled." Theſe, if they are any objections to a general proviſion, are as ſtrong, nay more ſo, againſt private benevolences; for ſurely it is more eaſy for a number of people, or a whole pariſh, to determine theſe circumſtances, than a ſingle individual.

THERE is another objection which really comes under this claſs, but which does not, at firſt ſight, appear to belong to it, which is this, "That general proviſions "are productive of idleneſs;" for even granting that a general proviſion does ſometimes

ſometimes provide for men, who, had they been as induſtrious as they might have been, would not have wanted a pariſh maintenance; would not this likewiſe be the caſe of private contributions? Would man be ſo inhuman as to ſuffer a fellow-creature to periſh in ſickneſs, or old age, without ſtretching out a hand to relieve him, becauſe he might have earned more when in health, and youth? If he would, what can be a ſtronger argument for a general proviſion? If he would not, would not then private contributions be likewiſe productive of indolence, if for this reaſon a general proviſion is?

Besides, if the poor are left to be maintained by private contributions, beggary and vagrancy muſt be allowed, or thouſands and ten thouſands muſt periſh in all the varieties of miſery; and if beggars were permitted to wander about,

whether this would not be a much more powerful cauſe of idleneſs, than even a general proviſion, conducted as ill as it is at preſent, I leave to the determination of common ſenſe? and even with this permiſſion, the moſt deſerving, and the moſt miſerable, would periſh unheeded and unknown.

THERE is only one more argument againſt general proviſions which deſerves notice, and this is almoſt unworthy of it; "That a law to enforce relief, tends to "deſtroy the principle from which it pro-"ceeds, the principle of charity. If you "force charity, it is ſaid you deſtroy it." But how any law can force charity I cannot conceive, it may oblige thoſe to give contributions who have not charity enough to give without compulſion, and in this conſiſts the great excellence of a general proviſion; but as charity is an affection

of

of the mind, a general proviſion neither increaſes nor leſſens it; for a man who gives what the law demands, with a ready and chearful mind, and with a deſire to alleviate the miſeries of his fellow-creatures, is as charitable as if the law did not make the demand.

LETTER V.

FROM the above reflections upon a general proviſion for the poor, and upon charitable inſtitutions in general, our Author next proceeds to a more particular examination of ſome of the modern charitable inſtitutions, and begins with the Magdalen ſociety. But before I attend him in an examination of his obſervations, I ſhall briefly conſider the deſign and effects of this inſtitution.

THE miſerable condition of proſtitutes had long been a matter of great concern to the ſenſible and compaſſionate part of mankind. It was very evident, that moſt of theſe unhappy creatures, who were in one unguarded moment ſeduced to the path of vice, were neceſſitated to continue in

in it for their ſupport; their relations, their parents doors were ſhut againſt them; thus forſaken and abandoned by the world, they had no other reſource left for the avoidance of poverty, and of immediate death, but a continuance in vice, and the enticement of others to ſhare their guilt; thus did they linger out a few years, with bodies lacerated by diſeaſes, and minds either ſtupified by liquor, or tormented by the ſtings of a guilty conſcience, juſt ſupporting life with a wretched pittance, "the "wages of ſin," miſerable in themſelves, and not only uſeleſs, but peſtiferous to the world; ſcattering around them, ruin, diſeaſe, death, temporal and eternal miſery. Who that has the dimmeſt ſpark of compaſſion, who that has the leaſt love for his country, or who that is in the leaſt degree actuated by the Divine Spirit of that religon of which we profeſs ourſelves believers, could behold theſe evils, and not

wiſh to remove them? At length, a plan was propoſed for the remedy of them, and an aſylum was opened for theſe unhappy creatures, in which they may find a ſhelter from ſin, infamy, and miſery; become eaſy in themſelves, and uſeful to the world. Certainly, if the firſt axiom be true, "That the moſt charitable inſtitution is "that which at once contributes to the "welfare of the ſouls, the bodies, and "the fortunes of mankind," and of which none but an infidel or ſceptic can doubt; it follows then, as indiſputably, that the Magdalen ſociety ought to receive the higheſt encouragement from every charitable perſon; for there, induſtry is encouraged, poverty is relieved, diſeaſe is cured, and vice reclaimed.

And, from the laſt account of the ſtate of this charity I have ſeen publiſhed, it appears, that the ſucceſs of this inſtitution has

has equalled the expectation which even its moſt ſanguine well-wiſhers had formed from its deſign.

It appears, that from the comencement of this charity, Auguſt 10, 1758, to February 26, 1761, two hundred and eighty-one have been received into the houſe, of whom twenty-five have been reconciled, and reſtored to their friends; eight have been diſmiſſed to ſervices; four have died with all the marks of unfeigned contrition; ten have proved lunatic, (a ſad and frequent conſequence of taking mercury;) nine never returned from the hoſpitals to which they were ſent to be cured; nine have been diſmiſſed upon reaſonable views of advantage; ten, becauſe they were uneaſy under confinement, though not otherwiſe blameable in their conduct; forty-one for irregularities, amongſt which want of temper has been the common evil; and

one hundred and five remained in the houſe.

With reſpect to thoſe who have left the houſe with credit, we are told, that the conductors of this charity have had the pleaſure to hear the moſt favourable accounts in general; they turn out good ſervants, and have approved themſelves to the families in which they are placed, and in which they continue, four or five only excepted.

For thoſe who have been diſmiſſed the houſe for irregularities, we are informed, that though doubtleſs ſome of them have been turned out for crimes, yet far the greateſt part have been diſmiſſed for faults and imprudencies, little petulance of temper, and refractorineſs of behaviour, which could not by any means be allowed; "And who can wonder at this, in a ſociety

"of

" of above a hundred young women, who
" have lived ſo much at large, have had
" many of them ſo few advantages of
" education or example, and been ſo little
" accuſtomed to the decency of a regular
" and amiable conduct? Nay, they who
" conſider the nature of this inſtitution,
" and that the preſent is an account of its
" firſt eſſay, will rather be ſurprized to
" find ſo few as forty-one, out of two
" hundred and eighty-one, have been diſ-
" miſſed for irregular conduct. It appears,
" likewiſe, that even of thoſe who have
" been diſmiſſed, *many* have never re-
" turned to their former deteſted way of
" life, but have ſought to maintain them-
" ſelves in the moſt laborious ſervices,
" declaring they would endure any extre-
" mities, rather than plunge again into
" guilt and ſhame. And ſome have de-
" ſired to be ſent abroad, that they might
" by this means avoid the fatal neceſſity

" of

" of returning to vice through mere want
" of ſuſtenance. So that upon the whole,
" not more than twenty, out of one hun-
" dred and ſixty-two who have left the
" houſe, have returned to an abandoned
" courſe of life."

SUCH was the deſign, and ſuch have been the effects of this excellent inſtitution. But for further particulars, Sir, I muſt refer you to the preface to Mr. Dod's two Sermons. It is now time to examine our Author's obſervations upon this inſtitution.

" THAT moſt infamous inſtitution (ſays
" he, in page 11.) which degrades the
" very name of charity, called the Mag-
" dalen, undoubtedly claims the firſt
" rank in cenſure, it was founded under
" the ſpecious pretence of reforming pro-
" ſtitutes, but can be looked on in no
" other

" other light, than the greateſt encourager " of vice that could have been inven- " ted."

Now, if the facts quoted above be true, it appears, that this inſtitution was not only founded under a " pretence of re- " forming proſtitutes," but that it *has* really *reformed many*. Experience, therefore, concurs with reaſon and revelation, to evince the poſſibility of the reformation of proſtitutes, which our Author ſo confidently denies; and conſequently, before it can be admitted that this inſtitution " encourages vice," it muſt either be ſhewn, that the facts there quoted are not true; or, *that the reformation of ſinners is an encouragement to vice*: neither of theſe points has our Author attempted to prove, and therefore the Magdalen inſtitution muſt ſtill be conſidered as a moſt noble and comprehenſive charity, and all that he

he has ſaid againſt it, only an idle declamation.

HAD I, Sir, the honour to be acquainted with any of our modern ingenious infidels, I would beg leave to recommend to them the noble undertaking of attempting to prove the laſt of theſe two points I have mentioned; and I ſhould be the more earneſt with them on this account, becauſe as their old arguments have been ſo often refuted, they ſeem to be in great want of a new one, to ſupport their uſeful opinions; and this which I would offer them, would, at one blow, to the great benefit of mankind, not only demoliſh the Magdalen inſtitution, but likewiſe the whole fabric of Chriſtianity.

FROM the Magdalen ſociety, our Author proceeds to an examination of the Aſylum for poor girls; and of this inſtitution

tution he ſays, " This cannot be a neceſ-
" ſary charity, becauſe it is only a narrow,
" abſurd, and confined proviſion for thoſe
" that are amply provided for by the laws
" of the land in their reſpective pariſhes."
That a proviſion is made for all poor children in their reſpective pariſhes, is indeed true; but till theſe laws are better executed, that this Aſylum is a neceſſary inſtitution, follows from the 11th axiom. But our author's aſſertion is not only contradictory to this plain axiom, but, which is ſtill more unpardonable, but not unfrequent, it is totally repugnant to another of his own aſſertions, which he gives us in the very next page but one. Speaking of the Foundling Hoſpital, " Had it been
" inſtituted in any but this age of chari-
" table frenzy, (ſays he) it might have
" been confined, according to the title,
" to expoſed and diſtreſſed young children,
" and received only helpleſs and forlorn
" babes,

" babes, who, by being deſtitute of parent " or friend, are too often left to expire " in the ſtreet, *or, at beſt, in the arms of* " *ſome pariſh nurſe; then it would have* " *been an excellent and truly noble charity* " *indeed.*"

Now I muſt obſerve, if the Aſylum for poor girls be an unneceſſary charity, becauſe they are amply provided for by the laws of the land in their reſpective pariſhes, how can that inſtitution be an excellent and truly noble charity indeed, which is calculated to take children out of the arms of pariſh-nurſes?

AGAIN, he ſays, ſpeaking of the Aſylum, " I do not remember to have heard " of the debauching of pariſh-girls; and " when they come into the world, their " inclinations, temptations, and opportu- " nities to be profligate and abandoned,

" will

" will be exactly the ſame, whether they " come from the Aſylum, or have been " brought up by the pariſh." As to the firſt aſſertion in this ſentence, that this writer " never heard of the debauching " of pariſh-girls," it cannot be contradicted, and all I have to ſay to it, is, that he is very ſingular, for if he has not, every body elſe has; and whoever ſees any thing of the management of pariſhes, muſt, prior to experience, diſcover that it will be ſo. As to the ſecond aſſertion, this I muſt beg leave to contradict, and my reaſon is, becauſe *it* contradicts the ſentiments of all the beſt and wiſeſt men in all ages and nations, " that thoſe who are well edu- " cated, will not be ſo prone to vice, as " thoſe who have had no care taken of " their education." I hope, therefore, our Author will excuſe me, if I incline to aſſent to this united authority, in preference to his bare aſſertion, unſupported by

by reaſon, and inconſiſtent with daily experience.

But, further; the whole of our Author's obſervations upon the Magdalen and Aſylum, are totally inconſiſtent with his own ſentiments in another part of this very pamphlet. For in page 39, he ſays, "The workhouſes ſhould be on a very "different footing to what they are at "preſent; they ſhould not ſuffer any per-"ſon to remain within their walls for one "day without earning their ſubſiſtence. I "would have them free of acceſs to every "inhabitant in the kingdom; but when "admitted, they ſhould not be at liberty "to leave it till they had paid for their "reſidence. Such a workhouſe would "anſwer all the *valuable and rational ends* "*of the Magdalen and Aſylum.* The re-"forming of proſtitutes is ſo impracticable "an abſurdity, that I think the promoter

"of

" of this ſcheme quite equal to the " bleaching of Blackmoors. Beſides, I " do not think, for the reaſons I have aſ- " ſigned under that head, that it is to be " wiſhed; *but take away the neceſſity many* " *unfortunate girls are reduced to of be-* " *coming proſtitutes, and it will anſwer a* " *very valuable end indeed.*

1ſt, We may obſerve upon this paſſage, which contains a chain of contradictions to what he has before ſaid, theſe work-houſes, which the Author propoſes to have erected, are, I ſuppoſe, deſigned for the poor, not for the rich; and they were deſigned, I apprehend, to take from *poor, or pariſh girls, the neceſſity of becoming pro-ſtitutes:* certainly then our Author has heard of the debauching of poor, or pariſh girls, elſe why this propoſal?

2dly, In this place he allows, that " *the* " *Magdalen and Aſylum have valuable and*

" *rational ends:*" of the former of which, he had before ſaid, in page 11, that " *it is a* " *moſt infamous inſtitution, which degrades* " *the very name of charity.*" And of the latter, page 15, " that it is innocent, becauſe " harmleſs; *but ridiculous, becauſe uſeleſs.*"

3dly, I muſt obſerve, " that to take " away the neceſſity many unfortunate " girls are under of becoming proſti- " tutes," as an end propoſed both by the Magdalen and Aſylum; which the former endeavours to effect, by opening its hoſpitable and friendly gates to debauched females; the latter, by receiving thoſe who are in danger of being debauched: and if this be " *a valuable end indeed,*" the Magdalen and Aſylum muſt ſurely *be valuable inſtitutions indeed.*

WAS I deſirous of taking every opportunity our Author affords me for cenſure,

I might ſtill conſiderably add to the catalogue of his contradictions; a fault ariſing from a neglect of definitions, and which will be found, by unbiaſſed judges, to be much more frequent in ſome Authors of great character and authority, than many of their admirers will allow. But I am, Sir, heartily weary of the examination of ſo many paſſages which deſerve cenſure, and am glad of the opportunity, which our author affords me, of mentioning ſome which merit praiſe: of this kind are his reflections upon the Foundling Hoſpital, which, as we before obſerved, he allows to be an excellent and truly noble charity, when it is confined to the reception only of helpleſs and forlorn babes, and to expoſed and diſtreſſed young children, who, by being deſtitute of parent or friend, are too often left to expire in the ſtreet, or, at beſt, in the arms of a pariſh nurſe; but when it is converted

into a general and undiſtinguiſhing receptacle for every child that is offered, it becomes very prejudicial. *Moſt* of his reflections upon this head are truly ſenſible and judicious, and it would give me great pleaſure to tranſcribe them, that I might be more particular in my commendations of them, was it not rendered unneceſſary by your having the pamphlet.

Our Author next proceeds to examine the Lying-in Hoſpitals, and the Hoſpitals for the Sick and Lame; and I am ſorry I cannot expreſs equal approbation of his ſentiments upon theſe points, as upon the foregoing. Moſt of his objections to the Lying-in Hoſpitals are indeed juſt, except the firſt, "that no women require them, "becauſe none in this kingdom are deſti-"tute of relief from a pariſh." For this objection is the ſame with one he has urged againſt the Aſylum, and is there-

fore,

fore, with that, anſwered by the eleventh axiom.

HOSPITALS for the Sick and Lame he allows to be neceſſary in ſuch a metropolis as London, both from charity to the unhappy patients, and for the benefit of the reſt of mankind, by the improvement of ſurgery. But his objection is levelled againſt the *number* of them; and indeed if they were of uſe to no place but London, his objection would be unanſwerable; but they diffuſe their ſalutary influence to the diſtance of a hundred miles around it.

NEXT we come to the Charity-Schools; and in our Author's obſervations upon them, I muſt confeſs, I ſee much to cenſure, nothing to commend. This inſtitution comes under that claſs mentioned in the ſecond axiom. For by teaching the children to read, it contributes to the

welfare of their ſouls; and whoever is acquainted with the ignorance of the uneducated part of mankind, in relation both to their moral and religious duties, muſt conſider this and the Society for promoting Chriſtian Knowledge as moſt neceſſary and uſeful inſtitutions. Firſt, in a religious light, as they are the means of procuring future happineſs to numbers of our fellow-creatures; and in a political one, as they render many uſeful members of ſociety, who would otherwiſe be peſts to the community. The ſame reaſons may, with ſtill more force, be urged in favour of the Society for the Propagation of the Goſpel in foreign parts.

Our Author, however, denies, that theſe advantages reſult from Charity-Schools. For, ſays he, in page 28, "the "advocates of theſe ſchools aſſert, that "they promote religion and good morals, "but

" but for this I appeal to the fact. Ob-
" ſerve the charity-boys in the ſtreets, and
" you will find them the very worſt ſpecies
" of black-guards, ſwearers, exceeding
" inſolent, and in all reſpects abandoned
" and profligate to the greateſt degree."
Now, allowing this to be true in London, which may with great reaſon be denied, and the direct contrary to which is true in all other parts of the kingdom, what will this prove? not that the inſtitution is itſelf injurious, or uſeleſs, but that the beſt inſtitution may be perverted, or that the beſt education may be rendered inefficacious by bad examples, and evil communication. Admitting, therefore, the above aſſertion to be true; to prove from hence that the inſtitution of Charity-Schools is injurious, or uſeleſs, our Author muſt either maintain, that the perverſion of an inſtitution is an objection againſt the inſtitution itſelf, which is contradictory to the

eighth axiom; or otherwiſe he muſt maintain, that a youth, who has had no education, is as likely to become a good man, as he who has had a religious one; which is as repugnant to common ſenſe as the former aſſertion.

But the principal part of our Author's declamation againſt Charity-Schools, is founded on this, that they are "nurſeries "for idleneſs." Now if our Author only means, by this expreſſion, that the children in theſe Schools are not employed in work, and therefore acquire no habit of induſtry, I grant it; but then, from the ſixth axiom, it follows, that this is no juſt objection to this inſtitution. If the Author means, by this expreſſion, that Charity-Schools not only do not promote induſtry, but they actually encourage idleneſs; to this I reply, that were thoſe children, who are not ſent to theſe ſchools,

employed

employed in work, then as to ſend children to Charity-Schools would be to take them from labour, theſe ſchools might, in that caſe, be conſidered as encouragements to, and nurſeries of, idleneſs; but what would be the employments of theſe children if not ſent to theſe Schools? They would either be ſuffered to play and loiter about all day long, wherever they pleaſed, or employed in begging, or ſtealing fuel, if nothing worſe. And let our Author himſelf determine, which is moſt likely to become an uſeful induſtrious man, the boy who is uſed to confinement; or he who is permitted to play about wherever he chuſes? He who has been taught obedience to a maſter; or he who is ſuffered to do as he pleaſes? He who is inſtructed in his duty to God, his neighbour, and himſelf; or he who is ſo far from having acquired any knowledge of his duty, that he has only learnt the arts of canting, lying,

lying, begging, and ſtealing? It is therefore evident, that theſe Schools are a charitable inſtitution, not only from the ſecond axiom, as they contribute to the welfare of men's ſouls, but likewiſe from the ſixth axiom, and moreover from the eleventh, becauſe they, in ſome meaſure, alleviate ſome evils which ariſe from a non-execution of the laws.

As to the Author's objection, that "Cha-
" rity-Schools make boys ſhun the uſeful
" laborious employ of their parents, for
" the eaſy occupation of clerks, footmen,
" and ſoldiers.

1ſt, It may be asked, whether there be any want of men in the laborious employs of life? 2dly, If there be, are they not occaſional workmen which are wanted, as mechanics, and manufacturers, upon any uncommon run of buſineſs, and huſband-

men

men at harveſt? 3dly, Is not the want of the latter owing to a cauſe mentioned above, viz. the annihilation of the ſmall farms? 4thly, Should a number of men to be employed a month or two, ſtarve the remaining part of the year? And would this diminiſh or increaſe the number of the poor? 5thly, Is not the number of clerks owing to the indolence of the better ſort, not to the inſtitution of Charity-Schools? 6thly, Is not the number of footmen owing to the vanity of the higher ranks in life, not to the education of the lower? 7thly, If none of the lower kind of people could read and write, would not the nobility and gentry take thoſe for ſervants who had not theſe qualifications? and would the number of ſervants be diminiſhed? 8thly, Are ſoldiers leſs neceſſary than manufacturers or huſbandmen? and have many of theſe been educated at Charity-Schools? or can many read and write?

FROM this objection our Author proceeds to deſcant on the fatal effects of a general diffuſion of learning. That the diffuſion of learning is indeed attended with ſome particular inconveniencies (tho' not in the ſenſe our Author means it) is indeed certain, notwithſtanding the generality of mankind, who miſtake opinions for knowledge, are not willing to confeſs it, and I deſire no other proof of it than our Author's own production. But to return from this digreſſion. Our Author declaims upon the great injury the Scotch have received from literature, and to this cauſe alone he imputes their neglect of merchandiſe; though whoever is in the leaſt acquainted with the hiſtory of that people, muſt be ſenſible, that their neglect of trade aroſe from a concurrence of many cauſes, the principal of which was, the long continuance of the power of the nobles in that kingdom. But ſuppoſe we

even

even grant that what he has ſaid of the Scotch is true, is there no difference between only learning to read and write Engliſh, and the acquiſition of the Greek and Latin languages? And can one forbear to ſmile, when we find our Author, in the warmth of his zeal againſt Charity-Schools, gravely declaring, that one of the good conſequences which reſult to the Scotch, from their laying aſide literature, is this, *that they no longer deſtroy, or dethrone their princes?* With theſe remarks upon Charity-Schools, our Author concludes his reflections upon the modern charitable inſtitutions; and with my obſervations on theſe remarks, I ſhall beg leave, Sir, to conclude this letter.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

OUR Author next proceeds to give us his ſcheme for a general proviſion for the poor; but I ſhall reſerve my obſervations upon that head, and what elſe I have to offer upon the poor's laws, to another letter; and in this, Sir, I ſhall point out the evil conſequences of an inſtitution, which our Author has not mentioned, and make one or two general reflections upon that part of his pamphlet I have already conſidered.

THE inſtitution of which our Author has taken no notice, appears to me to be much more injurious to a trading nation, than any of thoſe he has mentioned. The ſcheme of it is this; A number of workmen, of the ſame trade, have a weekly or monthly meeting, where every member pays

pays 3*d.* or 6*d.* for his club, and puts beſides nearly the ſame ſum into a purſe, out of which the members, their wives and families, are, in caſe of ſickneſs, allowed ſomething weekly; every member is buried at the common expence, and a conſiderable ſum is given to their widows.

THESE purſes have been, by ſeveral, very highly approved, and at firſt ſight, it muſt be confeſſed, they appear to be very uſeful inſtitutions; for they ſeem to promote induſtry, at the ſame time that they provide for the ſick and the indigent; but if we examine them more attentively, we ſhall find, that their utility is much leſs than it appears to be at firſt; and, if we attend to their unavoidable conſequences, we ſhall diſcover, that they are, in the end, very detrimental. In the firſt place, a very ſmall part of the product of each man's labour, when thus collected into a common

mon ſtock, will anſwer the purpoſes intended; an infinitely leſs ſum than each man muſt reſerve, was he to endeavour to maintain himſelf in ſickneſs and old age, by what he ſaved out of his labour when in health. I am ſenſible, indeed, that to this it may be replied, many of theſe perſons, without this ſubſcription, would never reſerve any thing for their future ſubſiſtence; and as this obſervation is, I am afraid, too true, I will therefore grant, that the deſign of this inſtitution is good, and that, if the management of it was committed to the public, it would be very uſeful; but as the conduct of it is at preſent entruſted to the members themſelves, it becomes fatal to trade. For there is in general, in theſe purſes, ſo large a ſum amaſſed, as would, for ſome time, maintain all the members; whenever, therefore, they think proper to demand higher wages, they refuſe to work, and, as there

are

are ſeveral of theſe ſocieties, conſiſting of men of the ſame buſineſs, they all enter into a combination, and trade is obſtructed: if their demands *are* complied with, both domeſtic and foreign trade muſt, for very obvious reaſons, receive great detriment; and, if their demands *are not* complied with, even when they have expended their money, rather than condeſcend to leſſen their demands, they fly to a different part of the kingdom, or to a foreign country. That theſe fatal conſequences follow from this inſtitution, experience too ſtrongly confirms: although, therefore, it relieves thoſe individuals for whoſe benefit it was deſigned, yet, as it is injurious to the reſt of mankind, by being detrimental to trade, the third axiom proves, that it ought not to be encouraged; and it is highly neceſſary, that the Legiſlature ſhould think of ſome method for the removal of theſe evil conſequences, for the laws which ſubſiſt

at preſent, to prevent combinations for the raiſing of wages, ſeem to be ineffectual.

I WILL now, Sir, take the liberty of concluding my letter with one or two general reflections upon our Author's pamphlet.

IT is evident, I think, that whoever undertakes to write upon ſuch a ſubject as this Author has choſen, and oppoſes inſtitutions ſo generally eſteemed beneficial to mankind, ought to be particularly exact in his definitions, very cautious in his concluſions, and fully acquainted with the deſign of every inſtitution. But upon an attentive and impartial examination of his obſervations, it muſt, I think, be confeſſed, that he is, in general, very deficient in each of theſe particulars.

SECONDLY,

Secondly, This Author ſhould have begun his pamphlet with delineating his plan for the better management of the poor, and then ſhewn, how the public hoſpitals and work-houſes, which he propoſes to have erected, would render uſeleſs moſt of thoſe of a private foundation; had he proceeded thus, he might then have demonſtrated with eaſe, that, by the adoption of his ſcheme, the Aſylum, the Lying-in, and many of the Hoſpitals for the Sick and Lame in London, would become entirely, and the Foundling Hoſpital, in great meaſure, uſeleſs; though, even then, he never could have ſhewn the Magdalen ſociety unneceſſary, againſt which he ſeems to have levelled the whole artillery of his declamation. This excellent inſtitution muſt ever be uſeful in London, upon every ſcheme that can poſſibly be invented for the maintenance of the poor; may it, therefore, continue

to the lateſt ages, to diffuſe its bleſſings on mankind! And may it perpetuate the fame of its beneficent inſtitutors on earth, till they receive their rewards in heaven!

HAD our Author proceeded in the manner I have mentioned, then his pamphlet could have been liable to no objections, but ſuch as might have ariſen from the defects in his plan for the better proviſion for the poor; he had then become a father to the fatherleſs, and a benefactor to mankind. But, by the method he has now taken, he is, though undeſignedly indeed, an advocate for the avaricious, and an adverſary to the indigent: and moreover, was he poſſeſſed of the eloquence of a Demoſthenes, and the reaſoning of a Plato, it would be impoſſible for him to prove the inutility of the preſent charitable inſtitutions, ſo long as the general proviſion continues to be conducted as it is at preſent.

For

For it is ſelf-evident, that they conſiderably alleviate the evils which proceed from a bad management of the poor; and the eleventh axiom therefore is alone a ſufficient refutation of all he has ſaid againſt them.

BESIDES, by the method our Author has now taken, many of the arguments he urges againſt the inſtitutions of others recoil upon his own, as we have already proved; and indeed, in compliment to our Author's diſcernment, I muſt think, that whilſt he was writing that part of his pamphlet I have already conſidered, he had then no intention of propoſing a new ſcheme for a general proviſion. I cannot but think, that had he intended this at that time, he would have ſeen, that moſt of his arguments, if they proved any thing, would prove too much, and that if they had any weight againſt any general

proviſion, and againſt the Magdalen and Aſylum already eſtabliſhed, they would have equal, if not greater force againſt *his* plan for a general proviſion, and *his* ſcheme for a Magdalen and Aſylum. This is the method by which I am moſt willing to account for our Author's frequent contradictions, and, in which, I dare to ſay, you, Sir, will very readily acquieſce.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

THAT there is a great defect either in the preſent ſyſtem of poor's laws, or in the execution of them, has long been a ſubject of complaint, and it is the earneſt wiſh of every one, that wherever the defect lies, a remedy may be applied. A late ingenious writer, and uſeful magiſtrate, has indeed treated this diſtinction with contempt, and he eſteems it as an abſurdity, to attribute any defect to a neglect in the execution of the laws, not to the laws themſelves. But, though he is, I believe, altogether ſingular in this opinion, and has himſelf, in another of his works, where he treats of the poor's laws, expreſsly attributed the bad management of the poor more to a defect in the execution, than in the formation of them;

yet, as it ſeems to claſh with the tenth axiom, it may not be improper, Sir, to examine into the foundation upon which he builds his opinion. "It appears to me "(ſays he) no leſs an abſurdity than to "ſay of any machine, it is excellently "made, though incapable of performing "its functions. Good laws ſhould execute "themſelves in a well-regulated ſtate; at "leaſt if the ſame Legiſlature which pro-"vides the laws, doth not provide for "the execution of them, they act as "Graham would do, if he ſhould form "all the parts of a clock in a moſt excel-"lent manner, yet put them ſo together "as the clock could not go; in this caſe "ſurely we might ſay, there was ſome ſmall "defect in the conſtitution of the clock."

THIS, it muſt be confeſſed, is plauſible, but not convincing. And it is a general fault with thoſe writers, who are greater maſters

maſters of humour than of argument, and of wit than of reaſoning, that they abound in compariſons and alluſions, and when there are two circumſtances, between which there is ſome reſemblance, they overlook the points in which they differ, but conſider them as entirely ſimilar, and think that the concluſion deducible from one is equally applicable to the other. This ſeems to be the caſe in the point before us: there is ſome reſemblance between the conſtitution of a government, and the conſtruction of a machine; it is neceſſary that the parts in each, *i. e.* the executors of the laws in one, and the wheels in the other, ſhould be ſo properly adapted as to perform their reſpective functions; in the one caſe, to act according to the laws promulgated by the Legiſlature; and, in the other, that each ſhould act according to the rules of motion laid down by the conſtructor. But then there is this eſſential

difference,

difference, that, in the latter caſe, all the parts, though conſidered as agents, are, in fact, really paſſive; theſe, therefore, if rightly made, and properly placed, *muſt* perform the rules of motion laid down by the conſtructor. In the former, the parts are really active, and therefore, though they were at firſt well-choſen, and rightly placed, to move in the machine of government, as being, in *general*, moſt likely to perform the functions allotted them, yet many cauſes may contribute to alter their determination; as a want of education, or ability, in ſome, and a difference in ſentiment from the Legiſlature in others; ſo that it is impoſſible to deduce a general concluſion from the conſtruction of a machine, which can be applied to the conſtitution of a government; and, therefore, though a fault in the working of a machine is to be attributed to the conſtructor, a defect in the execution of the laws is not

not always to be attributed to the Legiſlature.

THE laws which come under the denomination of the poor's laws, may be divided into three claſſes.

1ſt, Such as relate immediately to the proviſion for the poor.

2dly, Such as relate to the appointment of the managers of this proviſion.

3dly, Such as reſpect the contributors to this proviſion.

I SHALL begin with an examination of the laſt claſs, and, in reſpect to this, premiſe the two following axioms.

I.

THE tax deſigned to be levied for the proviſion of the poor, ought to be laid in

as

as an exact proportion as poſſible to every one's real eſtate, and money employed in buſineſs, and in the funds.

II.

THE cheapeſt manner of collecting the ſum to be raiſed *(cæteris paribus)* is beſt.

IN relation to the firſt axiom, the laws at preſent ſeems to be very defective. 1ſt, The tax levied for the proviſion of the poor is very unequally laid, and this muſt be attributed to the laws not being expreſs and compulſatory enough upon this head.

OUR Author's judicious propoſal for an equal pound-tax, would indeed very effectually remedy this defect, as it concerns the landed intereſt. But it is even more neceſſary, that ſome means ſhould be thought of for the removal of its inequality, as it reſpects monied men; moſt of whom

whom do not pay above one fourth part of what they would be rated for real eſtates; ſome of whom pay nothing, and others burden the land with an increaſe of poor. For it happens, I dare to ſay, in many other parts of the kingdom, as I know it does in ſome, that manufacturers, who have large ſums of money employed in buſineſs, carry it on in ſeveral country-villages, in conſequence of which numbers of the lower claſs are introduced into, and gain ſettlements in the country-pariſhes, and in ſickneſs and old age are maintained by them; to whoſe maintenance every farmer muſt pay his ſhare, when the perſon, who is enriched by theſe men's work, by having but a very ſmall, or, perhaps, no real eſtate in the pariſh, pays little or nothing towards their ſupport.

But to return to our Author. His propoſal, that this tax ſhould be aſſeſſed and collected in the ſame manner as by the aſſeſſors and collectors of the land-tax, is liable to the following unanſwerable objections.

1ſt, The land-tax is by no means an equal one, ſome counties, in compariſon with others, paying very little in proportion to their extent and fertility; an alteration therefore ought to be made in the land-tax, before the poor's rate be collected in the ſame manner.

2dly, The collection of it would by theſe means be attented with an unneceſſary expence, (contrary to the ſecond Axiom) for why ſhould it not be collected in the ſame manner, as at preſent, by the overſeers of every pariſh without expence, to whom no objection can be made

made againſt their collecting a certain fixed and determined tax, tho' objections may be urged to their fixing the ſum, and to their diſtribution of it.

3dly, THIS method of collection would not only be attended with an unneceſſary charge, but it is likewiſe totally uſeleſs; unleſs he means, that this money ſhould be received by the government, and infirmaries and workhouſes be built under its inſpection. But, according to this plan, the money would paſs through ſo many hands, that it muſt neceſſarily be attended with an *enormous* expence.

IN reſpect to the ſecond claſs of the poor's laws, I ſhall propoſe only the following axiom.

AXIOM.

AXIOM.

THE claſs of people appointed to be managers of the contribution, ought to be ſuch, as is moſt likely in general to make a proper uſe of the collection to the purpoſes intended.

BUT the preſent laws ſeem to be very defective in this reſpect likewiſe; for by leaving the pariſh to chuſe any ſubſtantial houſe-holders (words of far too vague and indeterminate a ſignification) many thruſt themſelves into office in ſeveral pariſhes, and muſt of neceſſity be appointed in others, who have neither proper abilities to ſuperintend the poor, nor ſufficient humanity to relieve them. Inſtances there are of this kind too many, and too fatal.

THE

THE appointment of improper perſons as overſeers of the poor, by means of the expreſſion "ſubſtantial houſe-holders," is however a defect not to be attributed to the Legiſlature at the time of making theſe laws, they being then very ſuitable to the circumſtances of the nation, when the country was inhabited by many more gentlemen of fortune than at preſent; but this inconvenience ariſes from the ſame cauſe with many others, that no alteration has been made in the laws, as the manners, cuſtoms, and circumſtances of the people have changed.

A FREE government, jealous of innovations in the conſtitution, ſometimes neglects even to make alterations which would be favourable to liberty. If the feudal tenures were proper, when the conſtitution partook of the nature of an ariſtocracy, for the ſame reaſon muſt they not be

improper, now the loweſt of the people are become free, and the Commons make a conſiderable part of the Legiſlature? If it was right, in the reign of Henry VI. that none who had a freehold leſs than 40*s.* a year, ſhould have a vote in the election of a knight of the ſhire, muſt it not, from the change in the value of money, be wrong, that any one ſhould have a vote at preſent who has leſs than ten times that ſum? If it was right that certain boroughs ſhould formerly ſend members to parliament, becauſe they were then conſiderable, but are now very inconſiderable, and other towns did not ſend members, becauſe they were then inconſiderable, but are now conſiderable places, with this mutation in the importance of the towns, ought there not likewiſe to be a change in their privileges? Thus it is likewiſe with the words ſubſtantial houſe-holders;, for the ſame reaſon that this expreſſion was

proper,

proper, at the time the poor's laws were made, it is now, from a change of circumſtances, improper.

In order to remedy this inconvenience, our Author propoſes, that in every county there ſhould be commiſſioners for the management and direction of the poor, one of whom he ſeems to think ought to reſide at each of the houſes he would have eſtabliſhed for the reception of paupers; and he likewiſe thinks it would be advantageous to the public, to have ſuch ſalaries annexed to theſe offices as ſhould be ſufficient to induce people of abilities to undertake the buſineſs, and to make them to live without any other profeſſions. But there are the following objections to this ſcheme.

1ſt, Theſe commiſſioners muſt be many or few; if they be many, this is liable to the ſame objection with our Author's pro-

poſal for the collection of the poor's tax, that it will be attended with an enormous expence. If the commiſſioners be few, then indeed it will not be ſo expenſive; but it is liable to theſe objections. 1ſt, If there be but few commiſſioners in every county, then there can be in every county but few houſes of reception for the poor; and if there be but few houſes of reception for them, large numbers muſt be in the ſame houſe, and conſequently the government of them will be attended with great difficulty.

2dly, As he propoſes that the commiſſioners ſhould have the appointment of the phyſicians, ſurgeons, apothecaries, and other officers, they will be entruſted with ſo much power, that it will be liable to great abuſe; for if *few* perſons are to be entruſted with the appointment of all the officers, what can be expected by any one, who has the leaſt knowledge of mankind,

but

but that the ſurgeons, apothecaries, &c. will be appointed without any regard to merit, that the offices will be ſold to the beſt bidder, and the poor will be ſhamefully neglected.

3dly, If the ſalaries of the commiſſioners be not two or three hundred pounds a year each, they will not be ſufficient to induce perſons of ability to undertake the office, and if they ſhould be of this value, what would be the conſequence in a few years, but that the commiſſioners would appoint deputies, to whom they would give a ſmall part of their ſalaries, and make their own places *ſine cures*; and by theſe means, this proviſion for the commiſſioners, which was originally deſigned to encourage perſons of ability to undertake the office, would in the end occaſion the management of the poor to be left to men of *no* ability.

But 4thly and laſtly, Let us ſuppoſe, that theſe commiſſioners would take proper care of the poor, yet if they were but few, this ſcheme would even then be attended with a great and uſeleſs expence. For ſurely the gentlemen and clergy of their reſpective counties (whoſe intereſt it is that the money raiſed for the relief of the poor, ſhould be properly applied, and that the idle ſhould be provided with work) are as proper truſtees, guardians, or commiſſioners, as any who can be appointed.

I am now to conſider the laws comprehended under the firſt claſs, which immediately relate to the proviſion for the poor. But, before I proceed to examine, whether the preſent ſyſtem of theſe laws are either imperfect in their formation, or defective in their execution; or how far our Author's propoſal would remedy the one

one or the other, I ſhall premiſe the following axioms.

I.

THE poor, who through age and infirmities are utterly unable to work, ſhould be maintained.

II.

THOSE who are ſick, or diſeaſed, ſhould have medical aſſiſtance, as well as a maintenance.

III.

ORPHANS, and children, whoſe parents cannot maintain them, ſhould be educated, employed in work, and, at a proper age, bound apprentices.

IV.

ALL thoſe who are able to work, but cannot procure it for themſelves, ſhould be employed by the public.

V.

All thoſe who might be employed, but are not willing to work, ſhould be compelled.

VI.

The cheapeſt manner of making this proviſion ſhould *(cæteris paribus)* be choſen.

Now let any one, with theſe axioms in his memory, examine into the preſent management of the poor, and he will find them, in moſt pariſhes, almoſt totally unattended to. If he has the courage to enter their houſes, amidſt millions of vermin, and piles of filth and naſtineſs, he will indeed find that thoſe who are unable to work have ſomething allowed them, but, in general, ſo ſmall a pittance, as is barely ſufficient to ſupport life. If he ſhould go into ſome pariſhes, he will find

able

able poor, who want employment; in others, ſome who are able, but do not chuſe to work, maintained in idleneſs by a much more ample allowance, than thoſe, who, through age and infirmities, are utterly incapable of labour; he will ſee ſome periſhing for want of medical aſſiſtance, and others dying through the ignorance of the perſons employed; he will ſee the poor children filthy, almoſt naked, wandering about in the fields, or begging, or ſtealing in the towns; yet ſhould he examine the pariſh expences, thoſe he will find ſo great, that, by their means, many of the contributors to the relief of the preſent poor, muſt themſelves, in a ſhort time, be reduced to a pariſh maintenance. And ſhould he enter the public-houſes, he will there, moſt probably, ſee the overſeers, and other inhabitants of the pariſh, drinking, feaſting, and carouſing, with the money raiſed for the maintenance of the

the poor, or perhaps even find them at games, prohibited by acts of parliament, winning the money of thoſe very men who are ſupported by the pariſh.

THIS is, by no means, an unfair or exaggerated repreſentation of the ſtate of many pariſhes, where the gentlemen have forſaken their country ſeats, and the clergy have neglected to reſide upon their livings; and, I do aſſure you, Sir, there is not a ſingle circumſtance here mentioned, of which I have not myſelf been an eye-witneſs. To theſe I might likewiſe add others, related to me by a friend, whoſe qualities, both of head and heart, render him amiable as a man, and truly valuable as a clergyman; but theſe truths are too melancholy for any one, who has the leaſt compaſſion, to dwell any longer upon than is abſolutely neceſſary; for who can forbear to lament, that ſome of his fellow-

creatures

creatures ſhould be ſo miſerable, and others ſo inhuman.

WHAT then is the cauſe of theſe evils? are they all to be attributed to a defect in the laws themſelves, or to a neglect in the execution of them? In part, perhaps, to each, though far the greater number will be found to proceed from the latter cauſe. For it is evident, that the ſick and diſabled poor might be much better, and much cheaper maintained, when they are collected into one houſe, than when houſe-rent, firing, nurſing and attendance, is paid for each ſeparately. It is likewiſe manifeſt, that it would be much cheaper to the pariſh, more uſeful to the public, and more beneficial to the poor themſelves, were ſuch of the men, women, and children, who are able to work, inſtead of being maintained in idleneſs, furniſhed with employment; which can ſcarcely be performed

performed at all, or, at leaſt, not ſo advantageouſly, unleſs they are collected into one houſe.

THE Legiſlature, influenced by theſe reaſons, has empowered each pariſh, or two or three pariſhes, to join together to erect houſes for the reception of the ſick and infirm, and for the proviſion of a convenient ſtock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, ſtuff, and other wares, for the employment of the able; but this proviſion, which, even under the management of the preſent overſeers, would be beneficial to the poor, and to the public, and which is ſo admirably calculated to leſſen, in ſome meaſure, the pariſh expences, that one would have thought it would have been greedily embraced, and that the only thing to be feared was, leſt, from the avarice and rapaciouſneſs of ſome overſeers, the poor ſhould be compelled to work

work too much, is, on the contrary, almoſt entirely unexecuted; for, though houſes are indeed erected in moſt pariſhes for the reception of paupers, ſo far are they from deſerving the name of work-houſes, that they are, in general, the idleſt houſes in the pariſh. And however quick-ſighted that claſs of people is (upon whom, at preſent, devolves the important truſt of the guardianſhip of the poor) in the diſcernment of their intereſts in ſome reſpects, where the advantages and diſadvantages are immediately before them; yet, in others, for want of foreſight, they act in as direct an oppoſition to it as poſſible; for it is with them an unfailing maxim, exemplified every day in the management of the poor, to expoſe themſelves to the certain expence of a guinea for the future, to ſave a ſhilling for the preſent, It is this principle which makes them neglect to execute the proviſion juſt mentioned.

and

and it is this neglect which occaſions all the flagrant evils which juſtify complaint.

THE points, in which the laws themſelves ſeem to be defective, are theſe.

FIRST, An overſeer is not, by the preſent laws, obliged to relieve a poor perſon, till the pauper has, by himſelf or others, made a complaint at a pariſh meeting, or to two overſeers, and has made oath before a juſtice of the peace, of having been refuſed relief, and the juſtice ſees that there was juſt cauſe for complaint. But, by this means, the ſick ſometimes die before they can have phyſical aſſiſtance.

SECONDLY, As a determent from idleneſs, the Legiſlature has ordered, that they who are able, but not willing to work, ſhould be committed to priſon. This puniſhment, indeed, ſuch as it is,

is

is very ſeldom inflicted, and, if it was, how the indolent are to be deterred by the commitment of them to priſon, how it can be an adequate puniſhment to idleneſs, or how it can have any other effect than to make them ſtill more idle and vicious, I cannot diſcover? Certainly the only proper and adequate puniſhment of idleneſs is labour. Perhaps it will be ſaid, that, by a later act, the idle are not to be committed to priſon, but to the houſe of correction. But to this I anſwer, that very few of theſe places of confinement are erected, and thoſe that are, though they were deſigned as houſes of correction, are, in part, through a defect in the laws, and in part, through a neglect in the execution of them, no better than priſons; in ſome no work is provided, and in others, if there were materials for work, the governors dare not, on account of the number and flagitiouſneſs of the perſons committed,

furniſh

furniſh them with the neceſſary implements of labour.

Again, The Legiſlature, in order to make men induſtrious, by rendering a pariſh maintenance diſgraceful, has provided, that all who are maintained by a pariſh ſhould wear badges; but, through the lenity and humanity of moſt gentlemen, this law is but in very few put into execution; and, though many eſteem it as an excellent proviſion, yet it ſeems difficult to conceive that any advantages would attend the execution of it: for ſurely we may hope, that no one but our Author will aſſert, that "Diſgrace and "contempt ſhould never fail to attend "thoſe who receive charity." Every one indeed muſt be glad that the idle could be deterred by theſe means from the want of a pariſh maintenance, but who can be ſo void of compaſſion, ſo inhuman, I could

could almoſt ſay, as to wiſh that theſe circumſtances ſhould attend the aged, the diſeaſed, and the unfortunate? And when theſe badges are worn by the induſtrious, as well as the indolent, they certainly can be no determents from idleneſs; on the contrary, the diſgrace which attends them may give uneaſineſs to the induſtrious and unfortunate, but it cannot be ſuppoſed that *they* will be affected with it, who are not aſhamed of idleneſs and beggary. Labour, not ſhame, is the proper puniſhment of indolence; if, therefore, the idle were compelled to work, badges, or any other marks of infamy, would be unneceſſary.

BADGES were likewiſe deſigned to prevent beggary; but that they are not likely to diminiſh, but may probably increaſe the number of beggars, will be evident from this ſhort argument. The lower

claſs of mankind will either be affected with the diſgrace attending theſe badges, or they will not; if they will not, then badges are uſeleſs; if they will, then, tho' they may prevent thoſe from begging who *do* receive collection, they will occaſion others to beg, that they *may not* receive collection, and be obliged to wear them.

Such appears to be the inefficacy of badges for the prevention of beggary; and indeed it ſeems to be ſomewhat inconſiſtent to ſuppoſe, than any circumſtance, which was deſigned to deter men from a pariſh maintenance, ſhould, at the ſame time, (if I may uſe the expreſſion) be an antidote to begging; for the greater you make the determent from the latter, you muſt, for that very reaſon, increaſe the puniſhment againſt the former; otherwiſe, in the ſame proportion that men are prevented from the one, they will be incited

cited to the other. This is the caſe in reſpect to ſeveral actions, particularly robbery and murder; the more you increaſe the puniſhment againſt the former, or facilitate the apprehending of robbers, the more men will be induced to commit murder, to conceal the robbery, and avoid the puniſhment due to that; and though in this kingdom theſe crimes have nearly the ſame puniſhment, and the former is ſeldom attended with the latter, yet this, I am afraid, is not the effect of the humanity of the Engliſh, but, as paradoxical as it may appear, ariſes from a defect in our police.

In reſpect to the ſuppreſſion of vagrants, there is no point which the legiſlative power of this kingdom ſeems to have taken more into conſideration; yet, I think I may venture to ſay, that the multitude of beggars, with which this nation is peſtered and diſgraced, re-

Beggars in 1784!

ceives countenance from the laws themſelves.

THAT ſome particular inconveniencies will ever attend laws made for the general good, has been already obſerved, it is ſo in thoſe eſtabliſhed by the All-wiſe Governor of the univerſe, can we, therefore, ſuppoſe, that it will be otherwiſe in human inſtitutions? But, in a free government, the Legiſlature endeavours, as much as poſſible, to remedy theſe particular inconveniencies; it is this which, in great meaſure, occaſions that multiplicity of our laws, ſo irkſome to the reader, and ſo valuable to the public. But as laws for the general good frequently occaſion particular inconveniencies, ſo likewiſe an endeavour to remedy theſe, ſometimes occaſions general evils; and this ſeems to be the caſe with the laws in reſpect to vagrants and beggars.

BUT

But I muſt firſt obſerve, that even mercy, that beſt and brighteſt ornament of a crown, ought not to be frequently worn; for if it be neceſſary that a puniſhment ſhould be promulgated for the commiſſion of certain crimes, it is equally neceſſary that the hope of eſcaping the puniſhment ſhould not be encouraged by frequent pardons, for this hope would entirely defeat the very end of the promulgation.

The laws againſt vagrants are, in general, very ſtrict, but the exception in favour of ſoldiers and ſailors to beg their way home, gives riſe to a multitude of impoſtures; and, though this exception is very beneficial to individuals, yet, if no method could be taken to prevent the conſequent evils, as public good ought to be preferred to private, this exception ought not to be made. But theſe evils are increaſed, by

ſome magiſtrates making ſtill further exceptions in favour of ſufferers by fire, and other accidents, which are not warranted, but expreſsly excluded by law; theſe undoubtedly call aloud for compaſſion and relief, it is the duty of every one to endeavour to reinſtate them in their former ſituation; for cruel would it be to ſuffer them to be reduced, from the enjoyment of the conveniencies of life, to the poor pittance of a pariſh maintenance; but to countenance and permit them to beg about the country, is not only an injury to the community, but often to the ſufferers themſelves, by giving them a propenſity to a vagrant unſettled life, and occaſioning them frequently to ſuffer death at Tyburn.

Such appear to be the defects both in ſome of the principal laws at preſent eſtabliſhed for the management of the poor, and

and in the execution of them. From hence, then, ariſes this queſtion, Whether the laws ſhould remain as they are at preſent, and the conſequent evils be, in ſome meaſure, remedied, by an increaſe in the number of voluntary inſtitutions? or, Whether the whole ſyſtem of the preſent poor's laws ſhould be utterly aboliſhed? If the former be thought proper, no more ingenious ſcheme can be propoſed, than that inſerted in the London Chronicle, July 28, 1761; in which plan it is, I think, propoſed, that an hoſpital for the ſick and lame ſhould be erected in every county, and likewiſe an houſe for the encouragement of induſtry, in which every one might be furniſhed with work who would chuſe to be employed. This would indeed remedy ſeveral evils which ſubſiſt at preſent; but, I muſt confeſs, I rather wiſh for an alteration of the preſent laws, becauſe I think a

general proviſion might be ſo contrived as to comprehend all the benefits of this ſcheme, might be accompanied with additional advantages, and ſome evils, which neceſſarily attend voluntary ſubſcriptions, might be avoided.

One inconvenience, which muſt always be the attendant of voluntary inſtitutions, is, that the ſubſcription cannot well be adapted to particular exigencies, but muſt be, in general, too little, or too much. At their firſt erection, even for the firſt twenty, thirty, or forty years, (in order to provide againſt failures and contingencies) only a much ſmaller number can be received, than the contributions for any one year would maintain; but in time, by a number of large legacies and donations, evils may ariſe from their riches; and like rivers, which, at a little diſtance from their fountain-head, are uſeleſs, on account of their ſhallow-

ſhallowneſs, at laſt, by the confluence of many ſtreams, they overflow their banks.

2dly, Though this ſcheme would find employment for ſome who want work, and wiſh to be employed, which is indeed very neceſſary for the country, yet without an alteration in the laws, there would be no incitement to the indolent to become induſtrious; a circumſtance which is wanted even more than the other, both in town and country.

If an alteration be made in the preſent laws, it neceſſarily follows, from what has been already ſaid, that that ſcheme for a general proviſion would be beſt, which ſhall, at the ſame time, be moſt beneficial to the objects of it, by affording the beſt relief for the indigent, moſt uſeful to the public, by the adoption of the beſt means for the prevention of idleneſs, and the leaſt

onerous

onerous to the contributors by the impoſition of the ſmalleſt tax. From hence it likewiſe follows, that the poor ought not to be maintained, as is the general cuſtom at preſent, by a weekly allowance, but that infirmaries, workhouſes, and houſes of correction, ſhould be erected; for it is certain, that the aged and the ſick can have much better attendance, nurſing, and phyſical aſſiſtance, and can be much more cheaply maintained, when thus collected into one houſe, than when ſcattered through the pariſh. And it is likewiſe evident, that it is impoſſible to prevent idleneſs, and encourage induſtry, conſequently much to diminiſh the number of the poor, and to leſſen the tax for their ſupport, but by the erection of work-houſes, and houſes of correction. So far every one muſt agree, and ſo far is agreeable to our Author's propoſal; but the greateſt queſtion to be debated is, whether theſe infirmaries,

ries, &c. ſhould be county or parochial houſes.

THAT county work-houſes, and houſes of correction, would be too large, I have already obſerved; the reaſon is, the management of ſo large a number would be attended with great difficulties. And that county hoſpitals and infirmaries would be ſomewhat inconvenient, will appear further from this conſideration, that they would always be placed in the county town, for the more eaſy attendance of the phyſicians, ſurgeons, and apothecaries; this is very frequently not in the center of the county, and if it is, ſome parts muſt neceſſarily be very diſtant, and conſequently the county town, and parts adjacent, would be either overſtocked with poor, in order to be near the hoſpital, or numbers muſt be removed to a great diſtance in the pains of ſickneſs, and agonies of death.

THAT

THAT parochial houſes would be improper, both as infirmaries, work-houſes, and houſes of correction, appear from the neceſſity I have ſhewn for taking the management of the poor out of the hands of ſuch perſons as are at preſent appointed overſeers; but if parochial houſes, for the reception of the poor, were eſtabliſhed, this would be impoſſible, as in many pariſhes no gentlemen are reſident.

THE neceſſary conſequence, from the foregoing reaſoning, is this, that as county houſes would be too large, ſo parochial ones would be too ſmall; and this conſequence ſeems even immediately to point out, at leaſt ſtrongly to evince the utility of the ſcheme I would humbly propoſe; "That in every large hundred, or, where "the hundreds are ſmall, in every two or "three hundreds united together, there "ſhould be a building erected, which "ſhould

" ſhould contain an infirmary for the ſick,
" and ſuch poor as are unable to work, a
" work-houſe for thoſe who are able, and a
" houſe of correction for thoſe who are not
" willing; and that theſe houſes ſhould be
" under the management of the gentle-
" men and clergy in their reſpective hun-
" dreds."

THIS plan appears to me to be the beſt calculated of any, for the removal of the evils which attend the preſent management of the poor, to be free from the inconveniencies of other ſchemes, to comprehend all their advantages, and to be attended with additional benefits.

IN the firſt place, theſe houſes would, beſides other advantages, comprehend at once all the benefits of the Aſylum, and Foundling Hoſpital, and they might even carry into execution the deſign of Charity Schools,

Schools, in a much better manner than it is executed at preſent; for though they cannot now, with any propriety, be termed nurſeries for idleneſs, yet it would undoubtedly be of great advantage to the public, if in theſe ſchools children were inured to labour, and it would not be the leaſt impediment to their learning to read and write; for an hour or two in a day, employed in writing and reading, is as long a time as boys can command their attention, and ſome of the maſters of theſe ſchools have candour enough to confeſs, that they find it difficult to furniſh the children with taſks for the number of hours they are at preſent with them.

Secondly, Theſe houſes would ſerve all the ends propoſed by the ingenious ſcheme for a houſe of induſtry, mentioned above, and they would likewiſe effectuate one purpoſe, which that plan is neither fitted

ſitted nor deſigned to ſerve. For as the poor would, in theſe houſes, be furniſhed with materials for work, at the expence of the hundred or hundreds, thoſe who are willing to labour, but cannot find employment out of theſe houſes, might in them be conſtantly furniſhed with it, and, after paying for their victuals, they ought to be allowed the remaining profits of their labour; but, on the contrary, the profits of their work who were idle, out of theſe houſes, ſhould be applied to the maintenance of the aged and infirm. By theſe means, this proviſion would be eligible to the induſtrious, and, as it ought to be, dreadful to the idle; it would afford rewards to induſtry, and be a much more effectual determent from indolence, than priſons, or badges, or any other marks of diſgrace.

THIRDLY, This proviſion would likewiſe afford much eaſier means for the apprehending

apprehending of vagrants than are now eſtabliſhed, and yet leave room for the exceptions which ought to be made, without the production of thoſe evils which at preſent reſult from them; for the vagrants who ought to be puniſhed, might, with very little trouble, be ſent to the houſe of correction belonging to the hundred in which they were found; and ſuch ſoldiers and ſailors as happen to be thrown upon a coaſt, at a diſtance from their places of ſettlement, (inſtead of being permitted to beg their way home) might be conveyed from one hundred to another, at the common expence of each, to the great benefit of the public and themſelves, to the utter annihilation of impoſtures, and the great diminution of the number of houſe-breakers, and foot-pads.

FOURTHLY, Theſe houſes might ſerve to remove another evil, which loudly demands

demands the attention of the Legiſlature. The number of debtors, who are in this kingdom permitted to remain in goal, to the great detriment of the public, and their own private miſery, has frequently been the ſubject of complaint, and is looked upon as a reproach to the laws and humanity of the nation. That care ſhould be taken to ſecure the unwary creditor from the fraudulent debtor is very evident, but to ſuffer a number of poor unfortunate men, who are utterly unable to pay their debts, to rot in a dungeon, and to incapacitate theſe men from ever having it in their power to diſcharge them, is ſurely neither conſiſtent with wiſdom, nor with juſtice. The Author of the "Conſidera-"tions" propoſes, that the work-houſes he mentions, ſhould be privileged places of exemption from arreſts for ſmall debts; but this would be to give countenance to fraud, and protection to diſhoneſty; but

were thoſe, who are now confined in priſon, permitted to enter the houſes I have mentioned; were they well fed, lodged, and cloathed; were they furniſhed with work, and was part of the profits of their labour applied towards the payment of their debts, this would be adding to the property of a number of induſtrious tradeſmen; this would be giving new life and vigour to a multitude of innocent ſufferers, who are now languiſhing in miſery; this would be reſtoring to liberty, and to happineſs, thouſands and ten thouſands of our fellow-creatures, and fellow-chriſtians, who are now periſhing in ſlavery.

Such, Sir, is the ſcheme I would propoſe, and the benefits I have mentioned are ſome of the advantages which would reſult from the execution of it; and I am the more confident of its ſucceſs, becauſe it is not the offſpring of my own imagination;

Good of Hundred Houses in Suffolk. 1764. See "True Alarm" &c. 1780.

tion; was this the caſe, I ſhould very much, and very juſtly diſtruſt it, and ſuſpect that others might diſcover ſome blemiſhes, which the partial eye of a parent could not diſcern: but my choice of this ſcheme is the conſequence of an examination of all the plans, which, I believe, were ever propoſed upon this ſubject, (for the opportunity of doing which I am indebted to you) and, I muſt confeſs, after a cloſe attention to, and mature conſideration of them, this appears to me to deſerve the preference. Was it likewiſe merely a theoretical ſcheme, to the benefits of which experience had borne no teſtimony, I ſhould ſtill have ſome reaſon to doubt of its effects; for I am ſufficiently aware how plauſible a plan may appear in writing, which, when reduced to practice, may be attended with great inconveniencies; but this has, in ſome meaſure, experience, as well as reaſon, to teſtify in

its favour; the principal parts of it ha already been put into execution, by the incorporation of the two ſmall hundreds of Colneis and Carlford, in Suffolk; and, I may venture to affirm, that, by its means, the poor in theſe hundreds are much better maintained, are happier in themſelves, and more uſeful to the public, than in any other part of the kingdom; and, from an account which has been publiſhed, it appears, that this ſcheme will very conſiderably leſſen the preſent expence; for from Eaſter 1758, to Michaelmas 1762, notwithſtanding ſome very extraordinary expences attending the firſt inſtitution of it in theſe hundreds, (the contributions being the ſame with what theſe pariſhes had paid, upon an average, for the laſt ſeven years) a ſaving has been already made of above two thouſand pounds; and, in a few years, the debt contracted for its firſt inſtitution will be cleared, and then the rates will not

not be above half what they are at preſent.

BUT though this plan, as it has already been carried into execution, is, in general, very excellent, yet I conceive that ſome circumſtances are capable of improvement.

THAT there is an abſolute neceſſity for taking the management of the poor out of their hands, who are at preſent entruſted with it, is, I think, ſufficiently evident, from what has been related of the manner in which it is conducted. This, indeed, ſeems to have been, in ſome meaſure, the deſign of the Legiſlature, in that act which incorporated the hundreds of Colneis and Carlford, by admitting only thoſe to be guardians who are either poſſeſſed of lands, &c. rated at 30*l.* a year to the poor's rate, and thoſe who occupy lands, &c. rated at 60*l.*

60*l.* But this reſtriction ſeems to be by no means ſufficient; for, notwithſtanding this excluſion of ſeveral who are managers of the poor in other places, numbers muſt be admitted by this very act, who, by their education, are by no means proper for ſo important a truſt, and who, by their noiſe and their petulance, will, when the novelty is worn off, drive the gentlemen from theſe, as they have from pariſh meetings, and make them leave the management of the poor, as at preſent, to their tenants. And ſhould this ever be the caſe, there is a power allowed to the guardians of contracting for the employment of the poor, which may be the ſource of many evils; for then in theſe contracts, all that both parties will conſult, will be to make a profitable bargain for themſelves, and which ever party has the advantage, the poor will almoſt equally be ſufferers; if the contractors, then they will be badly maintained,

maintained, to compenſate the loſs to the guardians; if the guardians, then they will be harraſſed and oppreſſed, to leſſen the diſadvantage to the contractors.

THE moſt effectual method for the prevention of theſe evils is, for the landlord to pay the poor's rate inſtead of the tenant; it is evident, that neither the tenant nor the landlord would be any loſers by this; but, on the contrary, as the poor would be much better managed, by the diminution this would occaſion in the rates, the gentlemen would be conſiderable gainers; the only inconvenience would be, that the gentlemen, by reſcuing the poor from their tenents, would occaſion themſelves a little trouble, if it *be* conſiſtent with humanity to call any buſineſs a trouble, which tends to the relief of the aged and infirm; or agreeable to ſound policy, to call any thing an inconvenience which

is of ſo much benefit to the public and themſelves.

But ſhould this alteration be thought too great, and what the tenants would never conſent to, (though they might ſtill be permitted to act ſo far in the quality of overſeers as to collect the rates) the method which, next to this, ſeems beſt adapted to prevent theſe evils, is, not to have ſo large a number of directors and acting guardians as are appointed in the hundreds of Colneis and Carlford, and to make all voluntary ſubſcribers acting guardians during the continuance of their ſubſcription; by theſe means this proviſion would be likely to be well conducted, both for this reaſon, as all ſubſcribers muſt be ſuppoſed to be warmly intereſted in the undertaking, and as the greater number of gentlemen there are among the directors, the leſs likely they will be to reſign their truſt to others.

I AM ſenſible that I ſeem now to be forced to that very expedient of a voluntary ſubſcription, with which I before found fault; but my arguments in that place, can by no means he retorted upon me in this. For voluntary ſubſcriptions may be made a very uſeful part of this ſcheme, and all the inconveniencies which in general attend them, might, in this particular caſe, be avoided. Firſt, The inconveniencies attendant upon voluntary ſubſcriptions, at their firſt inſtitution, could find no admittance here, on account of the general proviſion; and, in order to avoid the evils which are afterwards the conſequences of them, it would be proper to admit of no legacies, only annual contributions, and thoſe not exceeding a certain ſum.

THE laſt defect in this plan, I ſhall mention, is this, that there are no ſeparate buildings for men and women, and great evils may ariſe for want of this ſeparation; and I

 mention

mention this with the more confidence, as I know your ſentiments upon this point.

WAS this proviſion altered in theſe reſpects, and made general, I know of none which appears to be ſo well calculated to relieve the houſe-holders from the almoſt intolerable burthen of pariſh rates, and the poor from the mercileſs hands of pariſh officers.

I HAVE now finiſhed the reflections I propoſed to make upon charity, charitable inſtitutions, and the poor's laws; ſubjects with which you, Sir, are moſt intimately acquainted, both in ſpeculation, and in practice; ſhould you, therefore, eſteem any of my obſervations worthy of your approbation, as it is the applauſe I moſt deſire, ſo it is likewiſe the greateſt I can receive.

I am, SIR, with the greateſt Reſpect,
Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

SAMUEL COOPER.

Shottiſham,
June 10, 1763.